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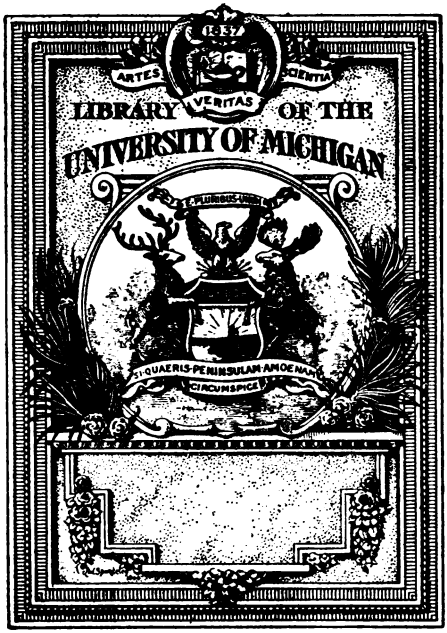
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MODERN IDOLS.

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STUDIES

IN

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.

BY

WILLIAM HENRY THORNE.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.
1887.

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TO MY FRIEND

DR. JAMES E. GARRETSON,

WHOSE WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT HAVE BEEN SOURCES OF INSPIRATION IN MANY TRYING HOURS OF MY LIFE,

THIS BOOK

IS HEARTILY DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

SEVERAL of the following papers were written originally as special articles for the *Philadelphia Times* during the four years the author was a member of its editorial staff. These, however, have been carefully revised, and the rest have been prepared especially for this volume.

An idol is an object set up to be worshipped. The aim of this book is to examine, not to destroy or mutilate the idols under review.

The sketches are not given to detail, but it is believed that certain just discriminations of character and genius are here made that will not be found elsewhere. And in this belief the work is modestly committed to the candid judgment of the world.

WILLIAM HENRY THORNE.

PHILADELPHIA, October, 1886.

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MODERN IDOLS.

I.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.*

Out of the darkness, out of the ages,
  Out of the nations' conflicts and fears,
Out of the souls of prophets and sages,
  Out of love's heart-aches, laughters and tears,
Welcome, thou latest, whitest of pages,
  Crest of life's ocean and crown of its years.

SCIENTIFIC biography traces no connection between the distinguished Englishman serving as subject for this sketch and his Italian martyr namesake, who, in Brescia and at Rome in the middle of the twelfth century, tried to do for his day and generation just what Matthew Arnold would like to do for these present times. But somehow there appears to be a spiritual kinship or higher apostolic succession linking their hands. In a pre-eminent sense both men will stand out in history as the persistent advocates of personal culture in a very broad sense, as opposed to all kinds of machine

* Written on the occasion of Matthew Arnold's visit to America.

excuses and substitutes therefor, and of salvation by this method alone.

Our Benedict Arnold, called the traitor, and the English Edwin, of the same name, translator of Asiatic myths, are both of different and lighter mould, with a far less serious mission in this world. In truth, Matthew Arnold is more completely and radically a reformer—not of faith merely, but of practice—than was Luther or Calvin, or Carlyle or Emerson. For what these preached and uttered in various ecclesiastical and transcendental formulas, Mr. Arnold is putting into the exact language of modern thought and modern criticism. He is a unique combination of natural piety in the blood set on fire of the broadest, freest thought of the hour, all combined with exact training and sound English practical sense. And he only fails of being a poet and prophet of the human soul and the future as he fails of the highest Christian faith and an utter abandonment of all his powers to some strange new preaching of it. He may think that this is what he is doing; but it is not. To do this a greater than Mr. Arnold is needed, and, of course, will come in due time.

Matthew Arnold's grandfather, William Arnold, was a respectable politician in Cowes, in the Isle of Wight, toward the latter part of the last century; and there, in 1795, Matthew's father, Thomas Arnold, afterward master of Rugby School and

professor at Oxford, was born. Matthew's mother was the daughter of an English clergyman. Piety and culture, sweetness and light—that is, Christianity applied from head to foot—were the elements out of which he came. He was born at Laleham in 1823, and only needed to be born again.

Of Dr. Thomas Arnold, while he was rector at Laleham, and when he applied for the mastership of Rugby, it was said that, if appointed, he would change the face of education throughout England. He did not do that. He found many men at Oxford who were his superiors in learning. But he was an enthusiast in the work of imparting knowledge to the young men that came in his way. His best work, however, was the begetting of Matthew, now, 1884, just past his sixty-first year, and everywhere recognized as the foremost living representative of English free thought, liberal culture, and solid, reliable manhood. In viewing this life, it is natural to trace it in the order of its own evolution.

AS A POET.

Matthew Arnold has tried several spheres of intellectual effort, all, however, from the first looking to and bearing on the advancement of the human soul in clear light and rectitude. He is not a genius; has none of the concentration, abandon, force, or inspiration of genius. He is a man of rich endowments well applied, and that is,

perhaps, equivalent to saying that he is not a poet. Like most English school-boys of refined feelings and lofty aspirations, he began early to scribble verses, and the fact that in his twenty-first year he won the Newdigate prize for his poem on Cromwell led him to waste a great many of his earlier years in writing what is called poetry. The fact that Mr. Arnold did not keep to this business is proof enough that it never mastered him or he it. And it is perfectly useless for his over-zealous admirers to laud the work which, as poetry, is destined to be very short-lived. Mr. Arnold's own definition of poetry is, that it deals with and describes actions; the greater and nobler the actions so much better the texts of the poems. If Shakespeare, or Goethe, or Tennyson had defined poetry, any one of them would have said that it had to do with impulses, feelings, spirituality, angels' and demons' wings, and such voices of nature as are heard by poets alone.

When Sir Walter Scott found Byron, he no longer wanted to write poetry, and wisely built his reputation on writing novels. When Schiller found Goethe, he was conscious of his own fixed limitation. And before the music of Browning and Tennyson and Swinburne, Mr. Arnold has taken to prose as naturally as Scott took to novels. Emerson or Carlyle could either of them have written better poetry than Matthew Arnold, and

Emerson tried it for quite a while, but both found wherein they were strongest, and held to that, as Mr. Arnold is doing in his prime.

It is not necessary to read a whole book of verses to find out whether the author is a poet or not. Any page of Homer, Shakespeare, Browning, or Tennyson will sing its own proof and praises in the ears of any man who knows. Mr. Arnold's poetry is an exact description of actions, but the soul of things is seldom revealed. It is beautiful prose, as witness the opening of "The Youth of Nature," "Raised are the dripping oars, silent the boat; the lake, lovely as a dream, swims in the sheen of the moon." But not one breath of poetic life in this pretty scene. A poet would not talk of a lake as swimming. Again, in the opening of "Sahrab and Rustum": "And the first gray of morning filled the East, and the fog rose out of the Oxus stream. . . . But the majestic river floated on, out of the mist and hum of that lowland, out of the frosty starlight, and then moved rejoicing through the hushed Chorasmian waste under the solitary moon." The one word rejoicing being the sole approach toward poetry, and that pure fancy rather than an image of the river's real expression.

A new worshipper, writing in a Boston magazine, quotes the "Strayed Reveller" as something choice in the way of poetry. Here are a few vivid but

somewhat stilted lines, run in prose always: "When the white dawn first through the rough fir-planks of my hut by the chestnuts, up at the valley-head, came breaking, goddess! I sprang up; I threw round me my dappled fawn-skin. Passing out, through the wet turf, where they lay, by the hut-door, I snatch'd up my vine-crown, my fir-staff, all drench'd in dew; came swift to join the rout early gather'd in the town round the temple, Iacchus' white fane on yonder hill." Not very swift, and feeling not at all like a reveller, but a good deal like a strayed priest who had lost his way.

And here is "Empedocles upon Etna," when "he reviews his life of empty thought and relinquishes it, flinging it back, as with a sigh of relief, into the general reservoir of being": "Like us, the lightning-fires love to have scope and play; the stream, like us, desires an unimpeded way; like us, the Libyan wind delights to roam at large. Streams will not curb their pride the just man not to entomb, nor lightnings go aside to give his virtues room; nor is that wind less rough which blows a good man's barge. We pause, we hush our heart, and thus address the gods: The world hath fail'd to impart the joy our youth forebodes, fail'd to fill up the void which in our breasts we bear." Because we have not been "born again."

Here is a snatch of Mr. Arnold's "Hymn to Apollo": "What sweet-breathing presence out-

perfumes the thyme? what voices enrapture the night's balmy prime? 'Tis Apollo comes, leading his choir, the Nine; the leader is fairest, but all are divine." And somebody has been unkind enough to hint that this is but a poor, school-boy, prosaic echo of a real poem, beginning,—

"Brightest and best of the sons of the morning."

But—yes, but Heber was a Christian, and so critic follows critic, as night the day.

As Mr. Arnold calls Byron a genius, a force of Bohemian, poetic fire, without culture or ideas, so would Byron call Mr. Arnold the incarnation of ideas, without the force or soul of poetry. Shakespeare had both, and hence—silence all around. Comparisons may be odious, but somehow standards must be set up in the gaze of the modern world till all mere idols fall.

AS A PRACTICAL REFORMER.

The middle portion of Matthew Arnold's life was given to the problems of education as accomplished in modern classical schools, and particularly as it accomplishes itself in polite and cultured literature. In 1851 Mr. Arnold was appointed lay inspector of English schools. In 1857 he was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford. In 1859–60 he went on an official visit to study the educational systems of France, Germany, and Holland.

In 1865 his volume of "Essays in Criticism," combined with the reputation of various poems previously published, set Mr. Arnold's name in the front rank of English essayists. England saw that she had a new man of fine calibre, standing on his own feet, independent of church props, superior to common pedantry, and yet devoted to high conceptions of education and piety. England thought that at last she had a man who combined the poetic, the rational, the moral, the religious, and the practical faculties. So Mr. Arnold was exalted and worshipped in at least two hemispheres. England was something mistaken, as often before.

In 1865 Mr. Arnold again visited the continent of Europe for educational study, and in 1867 published his work on educating the middle and upper classes. In the same year appeared his "Lectures on the Study of Celtic Literature," and in 1869 a collected edition of his poems and an essay on "Culture and Anarchy." It was now seen that the style of his poetry was based on Greek and Latin models, drew its breath from idealized Greek culture, dealt mainly, in a moralizing way, with the beauty and movement of nature as seen by modern eyes, and had a certain refrain of despair.

The essay dealing with the practical question of how to apply this culture to modern mechanic life, and how to evoke it in modern government, led Mr. Arnold to say at last, in 1869–70, in his "Cul-

ture and Anarchy," virtually what he said in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, in his lecture on "Numbers," viz.: that it is quality, not quantity, that must save us; that the minority, who live for light and justice, incarnate in their own lives, are, in fact, and ought to be, our rulers; that it is not the number of votes, but the proportion of clear intellect and conscience at work back of the votes that is worth considering. It is the old doctrine of the elect as the salt of the earth. In a word, that social and political salvation are not by any arbitrary hide-bound formulas or stuffed ballot-boxes, but by voluntary individual consecration to truth and lucidity and honor in all things. So, as was inevitable from the larger errands on which he was sent and the larger field he was to till, Matthew Arnold has passed beyond the sphere of his father, which was that of an educator of boys, to the larger school-work of teaching and inspiring men in every social sphere and in all practical and political reforms.

On every examination-day he would ask, not what have you committed to memory and crammed into you ready for utterance, but what clear assimilation of knowledge, of intellectual and moral power, have you attained. So on every election-day he would ask, not how many of us voted, or how often, but what was the exact proportion of intelligent conviction that went into election-day.

And here is the first phase of his unquestioned power. It is the application of idealism to every-day life, including politics and religion. It is applied common honor, and the world must come to it or cut its own throat as it has often done before.

Culture with him does not mean dudeism, or dilettanteism, or pedantry, or any weak and sickly thing, but complete manhood, that is, the completest you dare ask for or strive for and live, at this hour; all wrought into our human blood, into the text-books of schools, hymn-books of churches, constitutions of nations, and the ballot-boxes of the masses of mankind. It is a position that all sensible men believe in theoretically, but are apt to shirk in practice. Mr. Arnold insists that to shirk culture and truth is philistinism and barbarism, whether you try it in prayer-meeting, at æsthetic teas, in domestic life, or on inauguration-day, and no matter under what auspices and applause. It is English common sense and fair play applied to India, Egypt, and the Mississippi Valley: even to Congress and Parliament.

AS A RELIGIOUS TEACHER.

Mr. Arnold is now trying to work on still higher ground. It is in the last ten years of his life that he has really come to himself and his real mission, and is yet coming to it. The religious was always

the strongest element in his blood, but no great faith has seized him. He is still but a faint echo of the old Hebrew prophets; and so his religious works begin just where his poetry began. They are exact, critical, but, with one sole exception, they are negative and destructive.

If you call Matthew Arnold an English broad churchman, you must stretch the church a long way beyond what any orthodox man this side the Atlantic is willing to do. His "Literature and Dogma," published in 1873, claimed to be an essay toward the better understanding of the Bible. Practically, it was a clear, concise acceptance and re-statement of the biblical criticisms of Strauss and Renan, and the schools of freest thinkers represented by them. But it was more than this: it contained at least the hint of positive religious power not found in the works of German or French biblical critics. In this was its real strength, both for opposition to orthodox faith and for any future permanent good.

How calm, clear, and radical is the nature of Mr. Arnold's reform in this line may be gathered from the first short paragraph of the Preface to his "Literature and Dogma": "An inevitable revolution, of which we all recognize the beginnings and signs, but which has already spread, perhaps, farther than most of us think, is befalling the religion in which we have been brought up." There

is no opposition to religion in this. It is not an unbeliever, but a genuine believer and sort of seer that is speaking. Neither Emerson nor Carlyle, with all their subtile insinuation, would hardly have dared to use such a sentence. Emerson painted it in rose-water and Carlyle always evaded it. Mr. Arnold sees and asserts, with reverence for the past and some slight hope for the future, what they only felt and feared.

His definition of the religious revolution, however, is, that it is a revolution of interpretation of Scripture, with perhaps some important additions, not its rejection or annihilation. And this removes him by ages and diameters from any mere destructionist or common ranter against religion and God and the Bible, and really everything that keeps this wicked world alive, as the manner of some is.

In "Literature and Dogma," Mr. Arnold insists on the worth and need especially of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, and on the divinity of their spirit. What they need is interpretation to bring this spirit out again, and he proceeds to interpret them with all the lucid fondness of an intellect conscious of its power. For all that, "Literature and Dogma" was soon met by whirlwinds of Christian condemnation, and it was soon followed by Mr. Arnold's "God and the Bible," written avowedly to explain, and modify the impression made by "Literature and Dogma."

Both books assert the untrustworthiness of miracles, on which much of the Christian faith claims to be founded, and in "God and the Bible" Mr. Arnold says, plainly, "That no one has discovered the nature of God to be personal, or is entitled to assert that God has conscious intelligence." On both these points he is one with anti-Christian free-thinkers. But in his unity and harmony with the best spirit of the Old Testament, in his constant assertion of the "eternal, not ourselves," that in all nature and history works or makes for righteousness, he is almost alone among the leading free-thinkers of this generation. For all that, the spirit of the prophet's consecration is not in him, though the world may never know what it is that Matthew Arnold lacks till the real prophet of the religion of the future arrives.

He breaks what seems to him the orthodox and stilted conception of the origin of Scripture, cuts its miracles to shreds, declares that the Scriptures themselves, rightly interpreted, do not teach a personal God, or salvation by dogmas, or the belief in such. But he reasserts every eternal principle of truth and righteousness, out of which the Scriptures grew; says they are here to stay, and that in the new interpretation, leading to a more divine consciousness in man, hence to a new righteousness, or culture of the highest, is the germ of the new heavens and the new earth that are yet to be.

And to all this he is simply a guide, not a creative inspiration, much less its prophetic incarnation. But here in this applied morality, and in what he may yet make of it, is the centre and soul of such lasting reputation as his work will bring him; also the centre of whatever good he may do in the world.

He said, "Life's true law is duty,
And the meaning of that law
Is to cease all search for booty
And to clip the lion's claw."

II.

ROBERT BROWNING.*

Thou hast the secret of life in thy keeping;
Hast cross'd all mountains and sailed all seas;
Say, may we find it by praying and weeping—
Incense of wisdom—"wine on the lees?"
Or must we win it, working, and keeping
The laws of our being, caught on the breeze?

OVER the north door-way of the room in Memorial Hall containing the English Art Exhibit at the American Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, there hung two notable portraits, before which intelligent visitors were inclined to linger with intent and unusual interest. The one a sharp, angular, grizzly-gray, piercing face, smallish, but of wellnigh resistless power. It was Thomas Carlyle. The other an oval, open, unintense, sunlit picture, not very remarkable except for a certain, suppressed, reserved force, a clearness of vision, a subtle halo of expression, and a combination of fine thought and feeling, all delicately veiled in luminous shadow, but known perfectly to the face itself, though as likely as not to be missed by the crowd. It was Robert Browning, whose name and whose life, through the growing popularity of his

* Written in review of Browning's works, 1884.

works, are becoming more and more the common property of mankind.

Robert Browning was born in Camberwell, A.D. 1812, a year also notable for the final birth-throes of our new Yankee nation, with other issues undreamed of by mortal man in those days. At the time of young Browning's birth Camberwell was one of the outlying districts of London, bearing about the relation to that city that Kensington bore to Philadelphia, Harlem to New York, and Roxbury to Boston, a generation later on. Camberwell is now one of the included sections of London, but still retains its independent name. It is a crowded, neat locality, made up in large measure of pretty houses of moderate rents, and occupied by what are called the middle classes, from whom, apparently, our poet sprang.

While Robert Browning is still alive, modesty prevents one from even inquiring into or recording anything like a personal history of the earlier or later life of the man. He was educated at London University, and what were the heart and brain aches of the period of youth, what the steps that led to his acquaintance with the poetess Elizabeth Barrett, the settlement in Florence rather than at home in London, and what the type and quality of companionship that existed between these two choice spirits throughout their married life, are subjects veiled to-day from all but the criminally

curious, who will creep into any man's bed-chamber in order to report its mysteries and decorations for the amusement of a gaping world.

A generation ago, English Duchesses and other leaders of London society were in the habit of admitting reluctantly that Robert Browning, the husband of the great poetess Elizabeth Barrett, did now and then write clever verses. We must have no prejudices. The Brownings may be contrasted but not compared. To-day the poetess Elizabeth Barrett Browning is remembered mainly for her series of sonnets, nominally from the Portuguese, but actually, as is now generally admitted, from the depths of her own heart, enamored of Robert Browning's soul, and for some splendid passages in "Aurora Leigh," meant as a monument to Robert Browning's genius, the efforts in both instances having been inspired by Robert Browning's finer mind. Add to these her poem on "Cowper's Grave," and that on the Psalmist's "Sleep,"—the one inspired by Cowper and the other by David,—and Mrs. Browning's story is pretty well told.

On the theory that to whatever inspires us to our best efforts a good deal of their glory belongs, Mrs. Browning will eventually share her renown with her husband, and every new wave of critical judgment points to the fact that he must increase while she must decrease. When she builded his

soul out of all the sacred, precious stones of the apocalyptic vision, and crowned him with the eternal love and admiration of what must be acknowledged as one of the richest hearts of the century, she builded better than she knew. It is to this day a beautiful love's temple: its fine thoughts still piercing the stars.

> "He stood a moment, with erected brows,
> In silence, as a creature might, who gazed:
> Stood calm and fed his blind, majestic eyes
> Upon the thought of perfect noon. And when
> I saw his soul saw,—Jasper first, I said,
> And second, sapphire,—third, chalcedony,—
> The rest in order,—last, an amethyst."*

So at her sepulchre it must be said, as she beautifully said of Cowper's grave,—

> "It is a place where poets crowned may feel the heart's decaying."†

But over the memory of no other public woman that has lived for ages can it be more fittingly and tenderly said,—

> "He giveth his beloved sleep."

Genius has lovers and worshippers, sometimes

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* Last lines of "Aurora Leigh."
† First line of "Cowper's Grave."

haters, but seldom friends; and nature always insists that its choicest spirits shall make a brave fight of it or die uncrowned. "Struggles of authors!" What are these to the struggles of poets, who have at once to fight the shrinking sensitiveness of their own souls as well as in the low arena of a grovelling world? But they do it, and the fittest survive.

In 1836, at the age of twenty-four, Robert Browning published his "Paracelsus." It found a few eulogists and a very few readers. "Pippa Passes" followed, and secured a little more favor; then came a lighter ambition: a different vein. Touched by a little praise, the divine singer would take the stage with beauty. So in 1837 "Strafford," a drama, made its appearance and tried to play its part. But, spite of Macready's fine powers, "Strafford" would not run: could only walk lamely, and, through this and "A Blot in the Scutcheon," Browning's dramatic career has hobbled itself to a doubtful close.

The theatre was no longer a teacher. It no longer had any leading influence in government circles or in the world at large. It was already, and was for a long time to be merely a thing of amusement, and Robert Browning was never made to wear or jingle the adornments of "cap and bells."

It was the day-dawn of a very earnest age. At

this very time, in the little British Islands, poor deaf Harriet Martineau was worrying through her political economy stories for the wholesale, humanitarian redemption of nations; unknown Mary Ann Evans was translating Strauss's "Life of Jesus," and seething with unuttered earnest energies; Elizabeth Barrett was getting ready for the London *Athenæum* her essays on the Greek Christian poets, and pluming her wings for such flights as no English woman had yet dreamed of; Tennyson was plucking at the heart-shreds of his "Locksley Hall," and in the midst of conflicting voices trying to catch the—

"Far-off interest of tears,"

not daring to dream yet what utter bitterness in that line awaited him farther on; Carlyle was writing "Sartor" with "star-fire," Ruskin was mixing the new sunlight of his "Modern Painters," and Darwin was walking knee-high through rubbish that would explain the "Origin of Species," and furnish a new theory for the evolution of man and the worlds.

In the midst of all this, and out of it all, it was impossible for Robert Browning, the man of clearest vision in all England, to play his part in British Drama, as then understood, or now.

The note struck in "Paracelsus" had to be regained, made stronger and more beautiful, till it

caught the world's ear and heart. It was either to be this or nothing, so there followed in due time "Sordello," "Dramatic Lyrics," "Dramatic Romances," "The Soul's Errand," "Dramatis Personæ," "Men and Women," "The Ring and the Book," "Jocoseria," "The Red Cotton Night-Cap Country," and finally all together, in new and varied editions, until all the world is taking up the strain that Landor started a quarter of a century ago, saying,—

"There is delight in singing, though none hear
Beside the singer: and there is delight
In praising, though the praiser sit alone
And see the praised far off him, far above.
Shakespeare is not our poet, but the world's,
Therefore on him no speech! and brief for thee,
Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,
No man hath walkt along our roads with step
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the breeze
Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song."*

It would be inadequate to say that Robert Browning is to modern poetry what Wagner is to its music, Whistler to its simpler art, and Turner to its landscape-painting, presenting entirely new

* To Robert Browning by Walter Savage Landor.

combinations of conceptions, catching and concentrating all the sunlight and truth of the hour, and putting them into a few soulful lines. He is of richer, deeper, and fuller soul than they, and his art and his mission on a higher range of hills.

Robert Browning has always been a sort of Socrates, Diogenes, and David combined. It has always been difficult to determine whether he was most intellectual, sarcastic, or pious in a high and genuine sense, and the merely trivial have never had wit or time to determine the question, or very clearly to interpret the meaning of the messages he has sent forth to the world.

He impregnates the poetry of existence with a humor that is at once subtle, sharp, biting, and beautiful. It is just as easy to criticise Mont Blanc, Pike's Peak, Niagara, or William Shakespeare as Robert Browning. If you do not like him, it only proves that he is not for you,—either he is above you or you above him. Every man will decide that question for himself. At all events, the person that stumbles at Browning may conclude that the fates or the mood or the moment are not propitious, and take to Longfellow or Bryant instead.

All herds have their leaders. Browning is the poet of culture and of strong souls. He is the poet of the moral sense and of the spiritual faculty in man. He sings for the brave and the true till they

possess the world. He is the modern poetic interpreter of the divine in nature, and life, and history. In tone and quality there is more of old Homer and of Sophocles in him than in any other poet for these nearly two thousand years, only he is keener, quicker, more subtle than they. He is not another Shakespeare; that is impossible. But Shakespeare's Hamlet, no longer fat and scant of breath, and no longer seeking mad revenge by poisoned daggers, but by kindly, living words of flame that cut like two-edged swords, returning good for evil and pouring coals of fire on the callous head of a hardened world.

Homer sang of war, Shakespeare of war and love and the supremacy of human passion; each in his way preaching a Providence that usually stood by the heaviest battalions. Dante and Tasso sang of deathless human sentiment; Browning sings his sight of the mission of love and truth, and of an unimpassioned Almighty, of the power of enduring tenderness and of the ministry and victory of these in life and history; how the fates and the stars and the angels, every wreck and storm and new dawn of day, all join hands with these, till the doubter and the doubt, the infidel and atheist, all but the mere liar and sensualist, are touched and inspired thereby.

What Tennyson wailed over as impossible in "Locksley Hall," failed to reveal in his "Two

Voices," and only prayed for with a refrain of despair in "In Memoriam," Browning, sitting at his ease in a new Zion of love and light, sets to finest music and sings and sings.

Do we wonder that it is intricate? Whittier in his plain Quaker way sang it dimly and quietly in New England. Longfellow, with a little more art, but with less sight and soul than Whittier, arranged it to lighter music, and poor Richard Realf in daft madness, seeking it, inspired with it, went out of his torn splendor with its burning words upon his lips.

It is the new voice of the divinity of sincerity, truth, and honor, and holiest enduring love, all wedded to and moulding that thread of force which rules the nations and the worlds. We can only take up a note here and there as first touched in "Paracelsus," and sung in stronger tones till now.

From first to last Browning's work is remarkable for an infinitude of short, sharp, consonant-ending words, which in his hands are wrought into softest music. In "Paracelsus" there is the musing of a choice spirit which has met and tasted the rarest pleasures life has to offer; has aspired to highest uses, and, missing many things that promised fair, still finds richer and fairer joys that stay. And this is life's whole meaning. This or mildew and mere gross death.

"Come close to me, dear friends; still closer; thus!
Close to the heart which though long time roll by
Ere it agin baeat quicker, pressed to yours,
As now it beats—perchance a long, long time—
At least, henceforth your memories shall make
Quiet and fragrant as befits their home.
Nor shall my memory want a home in yours—
Alas, that it requires too well such free
Forgiving love as shall embalm it there!
* * * * * * * * * *
Meanwhile I have done well, though not all well.
As yet men cannot do without contempt—
'Tis for their good, and therefore fit awhile
That they reject the weak, and scorn the false,
Rather than praise the strong and true in me.
But after, they will know me! If I stoop
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
Close to my breast—its splendor, soon or late,
Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day!
You understand me? I have said enough."*

Whether this was meant to be personal or not, it fits Browning's own life so well, and in fact the life of all royally endowed aspiring souls, that the poetry is also prophecy. It is a new priest in a new, inner God's temple, flinging incense into faces that neither saw, believed, nor understood. The "sea of cloud" would not bear him, as we said.

It was not that "Strafford" was undramatic or weak; it was too steadily serious. It had not

* Paracelsus.

sufficient play of light, wit, or badinage, to float its tragic thought. It was loyal to history, and united well the thought of its leading actors, but it did not sufficiently regard the nature of an English dramatic audience in 1837, or now.

It was all very clever, but it was not what the gods demanded of him. It was not his best. It was as if a talented preacher had taken to dramatic criticism. The perfect flow of nature was not in it. There was something wanting. It did not call forth or command, or use the soul's rich overflow, which is alone what a creative writer has any right to give to the world. And gradually his work took the deep, fine rhythmic tone that has made his name immortal. Though written apparently for quite other reasons, this transition period and state of Browning's life and work are beautifully described in later years. Something wanting we said,—

"WANTING.*

"Wanting is—what?
Summer redundant,
Blueness abundant,
—Where is the spot?
Beamy the world, yet a blank all the same,
—Framework which waits for a picture to frame.
What of the leafage, what of the flower?
Roses embowering, with naught they embower!

* Jocoseria.

Come then, complete incompletion, O comer,
Pant through the blueness, perfect the summer!
Breathe but one breath,
Rose-beauty above,
And all that was death
Grows life, grows love,
Grows love!"

Those laugh that win, and this is the sort of work that wins in the long race of years. It is the freshness and clearness of sight and expression that make all art interesting. Is Browning dull? You simply miss the point.

There are Edens and Edens, and the primal allegory holds good in some shape for all nations and all times, hence its inspiration. The old story of Eden was and is perhaps good enough and true enough, but some humanitarian people of late years have thought it rather severe upon Eve and a little more than any one woman ought to bear. Robert Browning is accommodating enough to reproduce a new version, with one Lilith as helpmeet to Eve rather than her Adam, all of which the knowing will not fail to interpret as in accord with the prevailing facts and changed sentiment of these times touching such trifling matters as a falsehood or two, more or less, between the tempted Adams and Eves of this complex world. But by all means read without prejudice, for the heart of the writer is sound at the core and gentle to a fault; and his eye is keener than a flash of steel:

"ADAM LILITH AND EVE.*

"One day, it thundered and lightened,
Two women, fairly frightened,
Sank to their knees, transformed, transfixed,
At the feet of the man who sat betwixt;
'Mercy!' cried each, 'if I tell the truth
Of a passage in my youth!'

"Said this: 'Do you mind the morning
I met your love with scorning?
As the worst of the venom left my lips,
I thought, if, despite this lie, he strips
The mask from my soul with a kiss—I crawl
His slave—soul, body and all!'

"Said that: 'We stood to be married;
The priest or some one tarried;'
"If Paradise door prove locked?" smiled you.
I thought as I nodded, smiling, too,
"Did one that's away, arrive—nor late
Nor soon should unlock Hell's gate!"'

"It ceased to lighten and thunder.
We started both in wonder,
Looked round and saw that the sky was clear,
Then laughed, 'Confess you believed us, dear!'
'I saw through the joke!' the man replied,
They reseated themselves beside."

The rest of the conversation was no doubt interesting; quite likely it lightened and thundered

* Jocoseria.

again, but it is not Browning's way to give the entire story.

Is this too biting, and do we want some record of human hearts on a higher range? For an expression of genuine love of the highest, saddest, sweetest sort, one may hunt long and not find anything to equal Browning's

"NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE.*

"Never the time and the place
And the loved one altogether!
This path—how soft to pace!
This May—what magic weather!
Where is the loved one's face?
In a dream that loved one's face meets mine;
But the house is narrow, the place is bleak,
Where, outside, rain and wind combine,
With a furtive ear, if I strive to speak;
With a hostile eye at my flushing cheek;
With a malice that marks each word, each sign.
O, enemy sly and serpentine,
Uncoil thee from the waking man!
Do I hold the Past
Thus firm and fast,
Yet doubt if the future hold I can?
This path, so soft to pace, shall lead
Thro' the magic of May to herself indeed!
Or narrow if needs the house must be,
Outside are the storms and strangers: we,
Oh, close, safe, warm sleep I and she—
I and she!"

* Jocoseria.

And here is another phase of the same fact, showing how a poet can speak plainly of life's "twofold mystery." He calls it

"PAULINE.*

"Pauline, mine own, bend o'er me—thy soft breast
Shall pant to mine—bend o'er me—thy sweet eyes
And loosened hair and breathing lips, and arms
Drawing me to thee—these build up a screen
To shut me in with thee, and from all fear;
So that I might unlock the sleepless brood
Of fancies from my soul, their lurking place,
Nor doubt that each would pass, ne'er to return
To one so watched, so loved and so secured.
But what can guard thee but thy naked love?
Ah dearest, whoso sucks a poisoned wound
Envenoms his own veins! Thou art so good,
So calm—if thou shouldst wear a brow less light
For some wild thought which, but for me, were kept
From out thy soul as from a sacred star!"

Or is it the ministry of love and fate as seen in the highest spheres of human labor, of which we want to hear? Here is the benediction after a pretty long and strong discussion on "The Two Poets of Crossic." An old minstrel had to play and sing before the appointed judges for a prize. He was doing well, and daring to hope, when one of the strings of his lyre broke and all seemed ruined. Just then a cricket leaped from its darkness, lighted

* Agamemnon, etc.

on the lyre, chirped the missing notes, and, of course, the laurel crown was won. Here are a few of the fullest lines:

"THE TWO POETS OF CROSSIC.*

"What a pretty tale you told me
Once upon a time
—Said you found it somewhere (scold me!)
Was it prose or was it rhyme,
Greek or Latin? Greek, you said,
While your shoulder propped my head.

"Anyhow there's no forgetting
This much if no more,
That a poet (pray, no petting!)
Yes, a bard, sir, famed of yore,
Went where suchlike used to go,
Singing for a prize you know.
* * * * * * *

Here the string snapped, and

"All was lost, then! No! a cricket
(What "cicada"? Pooh!)
—Some mad thing that left its thicket
For mere love of music—flew
With its little heart on fire,
Lighted on the crippled lyre.
* * * * * * *

* Agamemnon, etc.

"Ay and, ever to the ending,
Cricket chirps at need,
Executes the hand's intending,
Promptly, perfectly,—indeed
Saves the singer from defeat
With her chirrup low and sweet.
* * * * * * *
"But you don't know music! Wherefore
Keep on casting pearls
To a—poet? All I care for
Is—to tell him that a girl's
'Love' comes aptly in when gruff
Grows his singing. (There, enough!)"

January 15, 1878.

The affixed date plainly marks the key to this little mystery, known to somebody or other who remembers that date as perhaps no other in a lifetime, for when such poets give or take, it is a matter of soul for soul.

Do we want Robert Browning's estimate of the modern hale fellow well met, the fluffy, beef-eating, brandy-drinking, ubiquitous, loud Britisher, everywhere treading on delicate toes, and rasping on delicate nerves in this prosperous era of Christendom? Donald, in "Jocoseria," is our man, his motives and character exactly. Of course, Browning is not all diamond and crystal. There are, no doubt, lots of padding in "Hamlet," lots of ugly spots in the Himalayas, but their summits and echoes are still above the clouds. So there are

many lines in Browning that will live as long as "the moonlight sleeps on yonder bank or the gray-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night," and the thousand voices that still come to us from those lips which are now too cold for praise.

There is something about "Donald," the second poem in "Jocoseria," that reminds one of Tennyson's "Locksley Hall." The poems are in no sense alike. The comparison is simply that of suggestion, perhaps by dissimilarity. "Donald" starts out with a company of college comrades, as does "Locksley Hall," and the two poems do in some sense give the world a poetic estimate of life, say from the respective views and natures of the two remarkable authors. Then all comparison stops short and only the marked contrast is suggested. Mr. Tennyson floats through a sea of sentiment and passion to splendid impulses, with gleams of rare beauty. Mr. Browning in "Donald," with a subtlety only matched by the satire, simply sketches and laughs at the well-fed, boisterous Englishman of to-day, with scarcely a showing of his own delicate nature and hands:

"DONALD.

"Will you hear my story also—
Huge sport, brave adventure in plenty?
The boys were a band from Oxford,
The oldest of whom was twenty.

"The booth we held carouse in
Was bright with fire and candle;
Tale followed tale like a merry-go-round
Whereof sport turned the handle.
* * * * * * * *
"Good sportsman means good fellow,
Sound-hearted he to the centre;
Your mealy-mouthed, mild milksops—
There's where the rot can enter!"

This good fellow goes a-hunting, of course, finds himself on the rim-like edge of Mount Ben in Ross-shire, along which is a narrow, single foot-path. By taking it a man may save several miles of heavy plodding through underbrush. But he must be a genuine mountaineer, steady of foot and nerve and head. Such was Donald. Such are a great many Donalds, without much in their heads. On the narrow ridge path of Mount Ben, Donald meets a splendid specimen of the red deer:

". . . No fallow deer
Grown cowardly through park feeding."

Donald and the deer face each other; eye each other keenly; neither in a hurry, neither very much afraid; both surprised and a little anxious,—

"Then are the moments when quite new sense,
To meet some need as novel,
Springs up in the brain; it inspired resource—
'Nor advance, nor retreat, but—grovel!'"

Donald sank down sidewise, flat on his back. The deer might pass over him if it would. There was nothing else to do, and as the deer extended its foot,

"Which tastes the way ere it touches,"

and was passing over the prostrate Donald without giving battle, the good fellow whipped out his knife and stabbed the splendid creature, which then locked with its human foe, and man and deer rolled over together into the mountain gorge. Of course the deer dies of its wound. Donald is broken all to pieces, but is found and patched and bandaged up and lives to tell this story. And what does a poet think of a world that breeds such Christian men? What of this particular man?

"And 'there's my pay for your pluck!' cried this,
'And mine for your jolly story!'
Cried that; while t'other—but he was drunk—
Hiccupped, 'A trump, a Tory!'

"I hope I gave twice as much as the rest,
For, as Homer would say, 'Within grate
Though teeth kept tongue,' my whole soul growled,
'Rightly rewarded, Ingrate!'"*

There is no whining here, but a flash of that pleasure which Emerson speaks of as coming to

* Jocoseria.

men who teach their fellows from a certain height. And there are rewards and rewards.

When our modern ecclesiastical, professional, and general Mammonite hypocrisy wishes to see itself in the glass, and at the same time get a hint of genuine faith, there is a polished bit of mirror in Browning's—

"GOLD HAIR: A LEGEND OF PORNIC."*

"Oh, the beautiful girl, too white,
Who lived at Pornic, down by the sea,
Just where the sea and the Loire unite!
And a boasted name in Brittany
She bore, which I will not write.

"Too white, for the flower of life is red;
Her flesh was the soft, seraphic screen
Of a soul that is meant (her parents said)
To just see earth, and hardly be seen,
And blossom in Heaven instead.

"Yet earth saw one thing, one how fair!
One grace that grew to its full on earth:
Smiles might be sparse on her cheek so spare,
And her waist want half a girdle's girth,
But she had her great gold hair.

"Hair, such a wonder of flix and floss,
Freshness and fragrance—floods of it, too!"
* * * * * * * * *

* Dramatis Personæ.

Golden ringlets. The girl herself was proud of it, knew its worth. When she died, requested that her gold hair should be untouched.

"And thus was she buried, inviolate
Of body and soul, in the very space
By the altar; keeping saintly state
In Pornic church, for her pride of race,
Pure life, and piteous fate.

"Years flew . . .
* * * * * * * * *
"At little pleasant Pornic church,
It chanced, the pavement wanted repair,
Was taken to pieces: left in the lurch,
A certain sacred space lay bare,
And the boys began research."

In the space by the altar found a mint of real gold, to which the girl's hair had turned.

"Enough! The priest took the grave's grim yield:
The parents, they eyed that price of sin
As if *thirty pieces* lay revealed
On the place *to bury strangers in*,
The hideous Potter's Field.

"But the priest bethought him: '"Milk that's spilt"
—You know the adage! Watch and pray!
Saints tumble to earth with so light a tilt!
It would build a new altar; that, we may!'
And the altar therewith was built.

"Why I deliver this horrible verse?
As the text of a sermon, which now I preach:
Evil or good may be better or worse
In the human heart, but the mixture of each
Is a marvel and a curse.

"The candid incline to surmise of late
That the Christian faith may be false, I find;
For our Essays-and-Reviews' debate
Begins to tell on the public mind,
And Colenso's words have weight:

"I still to suppose it true, for my part,
See reasons and reasons; this, to begin:
'Tis the faith that launched point-blank her dart
At the head of a lie—taught Original Sin,
The corruption of Man's Heart."

In "Mr. Sludge the Medium," the simple barefaced lying of the modern cant called spiritualism, and the utter dupeability of modern "culture," is depicted as never before. In "Caliban upon Setebos," or "Natural Theology in the Island," the utter low abandoned wreck of the modern mere bestial sensual money-getter and money-spender, that—

"Loves whoso places flesh-meat on his nose,"

and yet struts our streets like a gentleman, is all set down for eternity. It is the worst hell of

Shakespeare's "Tempest," opened and labelled with the patent-medicine pleasure-marks of the nineteenth century.

In Browning's "A Death in the Desert," the Apostle John's story of the Apocalypse is retold in such modern phrase as will yet bear its richest meanings into the mind and heart of the modern doubting world.

> "Such ever was love's way: to rise, it stoops.
> * * * * * * * * *
> "I saw the Power; I see the Love, once weak,
> Resume the Power: and in this word 'I see,'
> Lo, there is recognized the Spirit of both
> That, moving o'er the spirit of man, unblinds
> His eye and bids him look. . . ."

Does your whining humanitarian who sings us that life fails to yield the good or the joys we crave in youth, or your mere blatant infidel, who says disease is catching but virtue not so,—hence that the gods are asleep or dead,—really want a revelation of natural spiritual truth, let him read till he understands Browning's "Apparent Failure," say even only the last verse, thus:

> "It's wiser being good than bad;
> It's safer being meek than fierce:
> It's fitter being sane than mad.
> My own hope is, a sun will pierce

The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That, after Last, returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst."*

Better still, let him read "Rabbi Ben Ezra," remembering all the while that the words are not those of a "hireling priest," protestant or other, but the words of a clear-sighted, immortal, new poet, who has tasted your laboratories, seances and criticisms, atheisms and what not; tasted them and rejected them, and still has no despair to preach, but an immortal ringing spiritual truth to tell. Come,—

"Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith 'A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!'
* * * * * * * * * * *
"Then, welcome each rebuff,
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but go!
Be our joys three parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!
* * * * * * * * * * *

* Dramatis Personæ.

"Not once beat 'Praise be Thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw Power, shall see Love perfect too:
Perfect I call Thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what Thou shalt do!'"

Everywhere, in the midst of jagged tricks of oddest rhymes, there are bursts of finest splendor as of a thousand cloudless, blue and crimson sunsets breaking into one. And if the modern swarm of dudes and infidels and many-voiced secular smart people who think the world was made for them and will end with them would learn a little wisdom from the vanished years, Mr. Browning is kind enough to hint where that can be had for the seeking. Mr. Browning's dude is,—

"PAMBO.*

"Suppose that we fast (work done, comes play),
With a grave tale told in Crambo—
As our hearty sires were wont to say—
Whereof the hero is Pambo!

"Do you happen to know who Pambo was?
Nor I—but this much have heard of him:
He entered one day a college class
And asked—was it so absurd of him?—

* Jocoseria.

"'May Pambo learn wisdom ere practice it?
In wisdom I fain would ground me;
Since wisdom is centered in Holy Writ
Some Psalm to the purpose expound me!'

"'That Psalm,' the professor smiled, 'shall be
Untroubled by doubt which dirtieth
Pellucid streams when an ass like thee
Would drink there—the nine-and-thirtieth.'"

To which all inquiring minds are requested to turn and take free of charge.

He said, "I'll climb yon snowy heights,
About which the poets sing;
Will kindle heaven's eternal lights
And will make its music ring

"Till error from its darkest den,
And all discords, near and far,
Shall vanish from the souls of men
Before life's bright morning star."

III.

OLE BULL.*

Rude winds, swept down from northern plains,
Caught by his listening ears,
Became, through human joys and pains,
New music of the spheres.

OLE BULL, beyond all things else, was the incarnation of listening soul. The supreme beauty of his face was not in his lips or in his eyes, as in a prophet, thinker, or poet, but in the intensified combination of all these as centring in the hearing of the ear. What he heard no man ever heard before, and, like the sight of the seer, his hearing and the use he made of it captured himself and the world. In his youth the concord of sweet sounds set his blood and nerves to tingling, and during the simple home concerts often sent the boy under the tables in his father's house or in some retired corner, where all the faculties and powers of his being might silently crowd themselves into the music of the hour. Harmony smote his ears with that keen pleasure which is always akin to pain, as

* Written in review of Mrs. Bull's Memoir of Ole Bull, 1883.

natural and human beauty smites the eyes of a born artist. All the pent-up Norse melodies of ages came to perfect soulful expression in him, and through him became art and beauty, loved and admired by all the modern world. He was to the Norse lands what Burns was to Scotland, an incarnation of its native song. He grew up with music like Topsy "growed up out of the ground."

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

Ole Bull was born in old Norse Bergen, February 5, 1810, and was the first of ten children. By his father's mother side he came of the Norse Storms, of whom was the poet Edward Storm, and his mother was of the old Dutch family of Gulmuydens. His father was a physician by profession, but both parents were musical in the genuine sense. Their evenings were not spent in small talk, but in family musicals,—in the creation of fanciful and deeper ripples of harmony. Little Ole was enraptured so in his own home and inhaled music at his mother's breast. A few years later Mr. Winding, Ole's sensible schoolmaster, said to him, "Take to your fiddle in earnest, my boy, and don't waste your time here." How earnestly he took to it, how he loved it, pressed it to his bosom, hugged it and petted it, till he made it tell all the heart-aches and joys of a weeping and laughing world, is now known to everybody.

MUSICAL SUSCEPTIBILITY.

Nothing in the whole range of biography or criticism, musical or philosophical, is more keenly and simply discriminative of the comparative spirit of the English and the Norse, especially as related to music, than Ole Bull's story of a visit to England. While there he once asked why the people never sang on the highroads and in the lanes, and his attention was called to one of those whining female ballad singers that so often make the daylight hideous through the English villages and towns. But to Ole Bull's ears it sounded for just what it was—"a cry for bread." The English cannot sing. Trade and ale and want and seafogs, combined, have driven their borrowed Norse melody out of them.

Of the origin of some Norse music, he tells this little fairy tale: A great-grandmother of the Norse people had the melody from a man whose great-grandfather had learned it of the Fosse Karl (the spirit of the waterfall), or from the Hulder, the shepherdess of perennial youth, who had fallen in love with him, adding: "The parson says such beings are not, but my grandmother knew a man who had seen them," and sight is the last argument in all cases.

His Uncle Jens played the violoncello well and had a collection of instruments. He loved to

amuse himself with little Ole's extreme susceptibility to music. When the boy was three years old Jens often put him in the violoncello case and hired him with sweetmeats to stay there while he played. But the candy could not keep him quiet long. The eyes kindled and the little feet began to beat time. At last his nervous excitement prevented his staying longer in the case. The music was dancing all through him, and he must give it utterance.

Running home he would seize the yardstick and, with another small stick for a bow, endeavor to imitate what his uncle had played. Ole heard it with his inward ear; but for fear his parents were not so pervaded with the tune as he was he would explain as he went along, telling how beautifully the bass came in at such and such a place. Seeing the child play this rustic and soundless fiddle, his uncle bought him when he was five years old a violin "as yellow as a lemon." He used to tell, later, how he felt carried up to the third heaven when his own little hand first brought out a tune from that yellow violin. He loved it and kissed it; it seemed to him so beautiful. To the surprise of the family he played well on it from the first, though he had received no instruction. He would stand by his mother's knee while she turned the screws, which would not yield to his little hand; but the tuning was not easily accomplished, since

his ear made him very critical, even at that age. His uncle taught him his notes at the same time that he was learning his primer.

FAULTS AND DISCIPLINE OF GENIUS.

His fondness for the violin sometimes led him to miss his lessons at school, for which beautiful trait of nature he got floggings at school and at home. Genius must shine in spite of commonplace opposition, if it would shine at all. The old Norse mythologies early captivated his imagination, and he finally wrought them into music. This was his mission. From early childhood he took profound delight in Norway's natural scenery. It was a tremulous, beautiful, receptive nature, aglow with consciousness to the finger ends,—born to music, fed on music,—a clear, soft, vibrating echo of all the finer harmonies of nature and art.

If one wants a real bit of the natural supernatural, here it is. One afternoon, while Ole was a little boy, his father bought him a bright red violin and put it away in a box in a room adjoining Ole's bedroom, and of that night the boy tells this story: "I could not sleep for thinking of my new violin. When I heard father and mother breathing deep I rose softly and lighted a candle, and in my nightclothes did go on tiptoe to open the case and take one little peep. The violin was so red and the pretty pearl screws did smile at me so! I

pinched the strings just a little with my fingers. It smiled at me ever more and more. I took up the bow and looked at it. It said to me it would be pleasant to try it across the strings, so I did try it, first a very, very little, and it did sing to me so sweetly! Then I did creep farther away from the bedroom. At first I did play very soft; presently began a capriccio which I like very much; it did go ever louder and louder; I forgot that it was midnight and that everybody was asleep. Presently I hear something go crack! My father's whip across my shoulders! My little red violin dropped on the floor and was broken. I wept much for it, but it did no good. They did have a doctor to it next day, but it never recovered its health." Reward of genius again.

MUSIC IN SHELLS AND CAVES.

Music in shells,—who has not heard it? Ole and his six brothers used to select sea-shells of different tones to blow upon, and under his direction they practised until they produced some very pleasant effects.

His mother took great pains in training her children in manners, and here, next to nature itself, is the source of that unostentatious, quiet elegance of manner that in later years always made his audiences feel that with Ole Bull they were in the presence of a gentleman. As the spirit took pos-

session of his boyhood he often longed for and sought solitude in the mountains, so it was whispered among the peasants that fiddle strains came flitting from the caves at all sorts of unreasonable hours. They said that "Hulder had come back to take possession of them again." And he had, but in human incarnation this time. At the age of nine years Ole played the first violin in the orchestra when his father acted at the theatre.

OLE SENT TO THE UNIVERSITY.

After having spent three years in study with a private tutor, Ole was sent in August, 1828, to the University in Christiania. Age now eighteen. When restrained by his tutor from playing Ole resorted to whistling and singing, and he soon found that he could do both at the same time. In this way he studied the laws of harmony. Ere long he was able to whistle and sing and accompany himself on two strings, and later he succeeded in playing on all four strings at once. These studies enabled him at length to combine six different themes at the same time, a sort of fugue which he always enjoyed.

At the age of nineteen he attended a concert at Nordhausen, and was so disappointed at the manner in which the composition was played,—a manner so utterly different from his own,—that he left with the conviction that he had no true calling

for music. It was the old struggle between genius and conventionality. What is called accident, that is, Providence, that is, the fortuitous concurrence of the eternities, led him out of the struggle the same old way with the same old result: that which was strongest in him, his destiny, encouraged and inspired by the most unexpected and improbable occurrences. He met some cronies and they all drove to Munden to give a concert. One of the artists grew drowsy. Ole called him a dummer junge (stupid fellow); a duel followed; only a scratch, nobody hurt, but the party fled the town. Back to Norway, to Christiania. Ole, disheartened, standing in the audience at a concert, was recognized by the crowd and pressed into immediate service, and, as in later years, took all hearts by storm.

GOES TO PARIS.

August, 1831, he went by sea to Ostend and thence directly to Paris. Seven years passed before he saw Norway again. Lots of disappointed expectations in Paris during those years; purse growing leaner all the time; naturally enough, numerous sentimentalists of both sexes caught the splendid strains of his violin now and then, and paid the tribute talent always pays to genius, but no promise of engagements came. Finally robbed of everything but an old suit of clothes, the great God Pan trampling all surplus nonsense out of

him and gradually bringing finer music out of "the reed by the river," a forced freak of gambling redeemed his shattered fortune. All soon spent again, when one day, exhausted and hopeless, he sought lodging in the house of Madame Villeminot; found lodging and also found Alexandrine Felicia Villeminot, an orphan, who afterwards became his wife. Was prostrated with brain fever; friends in Christiania sent him three thousand francs. That sort of talent was never yet born in this world without getting more in the shape of presents than in wages. It is the only way the world can pay genius, viz., by tokens of affection. There is really no adequate pay for such.

OLE GETS HIS FIRST START.

Substantial recognition and reward were also near. A Paris varnish quack first discovered him and engaged him to play on a varnished violin in order to advertise the varnish. Dukes and duchesses were at the little private concert, and, as always, "He did give his angels charge concerning him," and the doors of fortune and fame began to fly wide open, inviting him onward, onward, till every note had been struck and every ear completely charmed.

At Paris he heard Paganini, and bore away all that was worth bearing, became acquainted with Chopin, and they often played together in public

and in private. From Paris he made a concert tour through Switzerland and Italy. At Milan a critic found him, told him his faults and at the same time admitted his genius. This led to renewed study, especially with the view of developing the powers of the violin to express the exquisite finenesses of the human voice. At the end of six months' study he went from Milan to Venice, to Bologna, where in the same old way he won that great fame which followed him ever afterwards and that follows him still. Upper room in a poor hotel, composing during the day, playing divinely toward evening, Rossini's first wife, the celebrated Colbram, caught the music from the street while passing, listened, was enraptured. That night Ole Bull was called from his bed to play at the theatre because other artists had feigned sickness and in a pique refused to appear. It was all a quick, mad desperation. Ole played with abandon, and fairly drove his audience wild with ecstasy. As the curtain fell the artist swooned in exhaustion and the house shook with thunders of applause. So it continued to the day of his death.

What the old Norse Skalds, bearing their primal minstrel harps upon their shoulders, tried to sing of their Niflheim,—universe of mist and shadow,—their Ygdrasil (tree of life and death), and of their Mispelheims, Valhallas, and Gladheims,—life's paths of fire and ice, its mountain gates, its

groves of the beautiful, and its final halls of joy,—and could not quite sing it because the world's ear was not ready to hear; all that Ole Bull, first having felt it, inhaled it, lived it, and at last crowded it into his violin, gave unto us, with a depth of pathos, an intelligence, and a supreme art that only the masters in all lines can attain.

What Hans Andersen touched here and there of a new, rich poetic music, born of auroras, still nights, and cold brilliant sunlights, known only to men of the northern lands; what Björnson, in chaotic, intense, sharp passion, has woven into his splended tales; what Selma Borg, in broken snatches of tender, thoughtful, melodious, vanishing music, has given us now and then, all that Ole Bull, in the weird strength of his fine, persistent manhood, has poured again and again in full rapt splendor at our feet, which for the time felt as if they walked, as they did, among the stars.

From the year 1836, age twenty-six, when he appeared with Malibran and Thalberg in London, and held his whole audience fixed in mute and breathless attention, and won unbounded praise from the careful critic of the *Times*, until the early spring of 1880, when he appeared for the last time in the Eastern American cities with Emma Thursby, his complete, tremulous, music-incarnate soul gave the world its best, divinest energies, and then went back through his own homeland mountain gates

to the world's resting-place, with poor Björnson flinging love's flowers over his grave.

Of course, he was queer, wilful, mannerful. Too much sight, or soul, or harmony in a human body always acts that way. He was not made by law but by love. And his music, being in one man and one instrument, all that we usually get through many men and whole orchestras of instruments, naturally drove people mad with pique or with joy. It is a new illustration of incarnate nerve-power given, in this case, to music, the making of which, and the uttering of which, as in the case of every new creation of poet or prophet, is not yet understood.

Conventional critics still complain of his tricks, but they were the tricks of inspiration, not of mere grimace. All living poets have sung his praises. The man was divine. Some future disciple must fully explain his method and its meaning. The old masters heard the new music and admitted that it was a sound from heaven. Everywhere the doors of fame flew wide open to him. Women lost their hearts, their senses, as usual, and every human thing that had an ear and a soul was at one time and another moved to madness of joy and to tears. Of his tours in England and in this country it is needless to speak. They were simply a series of triumphs and ovations. Through him the wide world has leaned its ear in many a secret place,

where rivulets dance their wayward round, and a new beauty, born of murmuring sound, has passed into its face. It were easy to multiply pages in praise of Ole Bull, but the wife's "Memoir" must be read for its own sake as well as for his.

From rocks and rills new music flew
And lighted on the strings
His fingers touch'd; through him, anew,
The whole creation sings.

IV.

ROBERT BURNS.*

Listen! I will sing thee a song of light,
Distill'd from burning tears,—
A song that shall nevermore take its flight
From out the ceaseless years.

ROBERT BURNS was a new world's new creation. A poet so distinctively national in his individuality, and yet so absolutely cosmopolitan in his type of thought, never before touched this world. The Christian civilization of the past had come to incarnate world-granite in John Knox and his Scotch-English Protestantism, producing Cromwell and his king-slayers in Old England, and our own tea-spillers and witch-burners in New England: an earnest, fanatical race. But the world is not all conscience and justice and severity, any more than it is all mugwump, dandy, dallying, and clown. By natural attrition and reaction there had to come something solid and grand and beautiful in human character, human faith, and human thought, but less straitened and strait-laced. Nature was in her birth-throes for a new type of man, and Robert Burns was the first-born of this agony. Then

* Written for the 127th Anniversary of his Birth, Jan. 1886.

Goethe, and Carlyle, and Hugo, and Emerson; till at last the heavens and the earth are full of them.

Do you wonder he set the world on fire with his star-clashings and died of his own inward flame? Place your own ear closer to the heart of nature, and learn how, in all ages and nations, it throbs and thumps till it breaks in such momentous hours.

No merely professional man, no mere worldling or Bohemian, can understand Robert Burns, or say one just word about him. He was not of these, but above them. He knew more theology than the parsons; he could love like a libertine and rant like a Jacobin, but by instinct he was conservative and a gentleman. Above all, he sang like the birds and the morning stars combined.

Of all the life-sketches made of Robert Burns to this hour, two are remarkable alike for their contrast, conciseness, and freedom from cant: Carlyle's, which is simply a crown of praise for the poet's head,—a wild, indignant defiance of an age that could give birth to such a soul and then starve and murder it by neglect,—and an article on "Some Aspects of Robert Burns," written for the Cornhill Magazine by R. L. Stevenson in review of Principal Shairp's Life of Burns, published in 1879.*

* Article republished in Appletons' Journal for December, 1879.

The one talks of the sunlight and glory that were and are still around the poet's head; the other deals with the shadows that were about his feet. Both views are needed to complete the picture. But above and through these two and the rest there is somewhere a God's world-wide meaning, to find which perhaps we must never forget that

> "The heart's aye the part aye
> That makes us right or wrang." *

The bare outlines of Robert Burns's life are meagre enough and well worn; but, when seen aright, they are intensely fascinating, immensely suggestive, and a unit with the picture of the man now known to all the world.

An age that is almost wholly theatrical in a low sense, with its politics gone to mere pelf and its religion to utter cant in all kinds, is finding it more and more difficult to get into or understand the life of intense individual religious conviction allied to the first impulses of human freedom that possessed the family, the church, and the state four generations ago. But Robert Burns, Scotch Puritanism, and the American and French Revolutions were not born of mere strut or cant or shams. And, well looked into, the life of Burns is seen to have been the incarnate soul of it all.

In his early days the "Rights of Man" were

* Burns's "Epistle to Davie, a Brother Poet."

still a lively theme of human interest, and the matter of religion was still a matter of eternal heaven or eternal hell. It was talked about in the family, during work, and at meals; discussed after meetings on Sundays and week-days. Burns was born of this religious conviction fired with the torch of human freedom. It is not claimed that he was himself especially or consistently a religious person; that would be ludicrous. But with equal sincerity and skill he gave us his translation of the first six verses of the Ninetieth Psalm, beginning,—

"O thou, the first, the greatest Friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling-place,"—

and his own inimitable "Jolly Beggars,"—apparently the fruitful inspiration of much of Goethe's "Faust," and numerous more modern attempts at fanciful morality, the gist of which is all given in the chorus to this fibrous piece of mischief:

"A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

"What is title? what is treasure?
What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
'Tis no matter how or where.

* * * * * * *

"Life is all a *variorum;*
We regard not how it goes;
Let them cant about *decorum*
Who have characters to lose."

But, alas, his own wreck had now come, and this was in the heyday of his abandon, after he had written those verses to J. Rankin touching a delicate matter about a girl Burns had probably ruined; thus:

"I am a keeper of the law
In some sma' points, altho' not a';
Some people tell me gin I fa',
Ae way or ither,
The breaking of ae point, tho' sma',
Breaks a' thegither.

"I hae been in for't ance or twice,
And winna say o'er far for thrice;
Yet never met with that surprise
That broke my rest."

* * * * * *

Which, being very honest, is also very full of revelation of human character. It was genius incarnate touched with cool, deliberate brutality,—uncontrolled by heaven's divinest laws.

PARENTAGE AND BIRTH.

It is remarkably suggestive of the prevailing masculinity of Burns's nature and life, and perhaps of a hid genuine weakness in the man, that in the earlier sketches of him so little mention is made

of his mother. In his own somewhat florid account of his career, written in the shape of a letter to a Dr. Moore, Burns makes no reference to his mother,—except indirectly where he says that his father was advanced in life when he married,—although he recognizes his indebtedness to an old woman, remarkable for her ignorance and credulity, who resided in his father's family and frequently entertained Robert and his brothers with tales and songs about devils, ghosts, witches, and warlocks, with such effect that even in his rational manhood—if he really ever had such—Burns always felt an air of spooks' wings within him and around him when passing any "suspicious" places at night, and never really shook himself free of the so-called delusion. But Robert Burns had a mother, who, even if illiterate, had no little to do with that flow of blood and light that gave the splendor to his eyes and the pathos to his song. And it is worth somebody's while to find and restore her face and life more fully, and tell the world all about them before every living memory of her has gone.

A young Scotchman once told me that his father had often seen "Bobbie Burns;" and there must be still some people alive whose parents had often seen his mother: a rough-hewn, rude Madonna, but whose gift to the ages claims for her some reverent mention. Perhaps Robert got his

poor shrewdness from this side of the house and was ashamed of it. Perhaps not! Perhaps it was all the other way. And it is admitted that he had his mother's eyes.

Robert's father, William Burns, was the son of a North-of-Scotland farmer, who rented lands of the Keiths of Marischal, and shared their misfortunes: hence William was set down in the world to find his way comparatively alone. By poverty and perseverance he picked up lots of experience, made himself a capable, intelligent gardener, with an intimate knowledge of the Bible and of practical botany: a man of clear, strong observation and entertaining, good sense, which he could never quite master for use in his own interests; reticent and reserved among strangers, but talkative, with a genial austerity, in his family. He made companions of his boys; made sacrifices to secure them an education; himself taught them arithmetic at odd hours at home, and borrowed books for them on science and religion. "He would go to his daughter as she staid afield, herding cattle, to teach her the names of grasses and wild flowers, or to sit by her side when it thundered." Altogether, a compact, hoarded, tender Scotch energy, meant to blossom and die soon in his gifted son.

If you had broached Darwinism to William Burns, he would have said, in the language of another Scotch gardener a century later on, "You

can't get wheat out of timothy, sir," and would have considered the argument closed.

Robert Burns was born on the 25th of January, 1759, in a cottage near the banks of the Doon, about two miles from Ayr. During the early years of his life his father was gardener to a gentleman of a small estate in the neighborhood of Ayr: a position of eminent respectability, but ranging in the British Isles then, as now, somewhere between that of a laboring-man and a tradesman, or what is called the English middle class and the poor. This was Burns's start in life. Later, his father rented a small farm and increased his troubles. By the hard conditions of the soil and its owners, and through a lack of the acquiring, selfish instinct, William Burns's family were constantly on the verge of poverty, sometimes pursued by factors and near to utter ruin. But Robert was sent to school, and he managed to keep his head erect among the boys of richer parents. By quickness of intellect and application, aided by thrashings from the schoolmaster and much parental help, Robert became an excellent English scholar. Among the first books that impressed him were a Life of Hannibal and a History of Sir William Wallace.

BURNS'S BOYHOOD.

Up to this time, age about fifteen, there was nothing especially remarkable in the life of Robert

Burns: an intrepid Scotch country boy, son of respectable but poor parents; a school-boy without precocity or remarkable brilliancy; a solid, fresh growth of healthy human nature. As a matter of fact, seen from this distance, an unconscious incarnation of all that there ever had been of strength and beauty in human nature up to that hour. A new man-child, with the world beneath his feet. How would he step on it? How would he use it? As usual,

"Love took up the harp of life," *

creating the old rumpus, and Robert Burns's own peculiar and tragic life began. Infinite vistas of splendor opened and quickly closed to him and to us forever.

It was the Scotch custom to couple "a man and a woman together as partners in the labors of harvest." In his fifteenth autumn, Burns's partner was a "*bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass.*" They both "caught the contagion," and Bobbie Burns, finding his "heart-strings" thrilling "like an Æolian harp," took to writing poetry, as it were, to ease the strings.

To use his own exaggerated language touching this period immediately after his various smatterings of schooling, his life was "the cheerless

* Tennyson's "Locksley Hall."

gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing moil of a galley-slave." But, as Burns never had any experience of the galley-slave or the hermit, his language is far enough from conveying a true picture of his existence in those years. Put in common, sensible speech, he had not just the company that suited him, and he did his share of work on the farm. And of course it never hurt him. In those days, driving his cart or walking to labor in the fields, he pored over stray plays of Shakespeare, Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, Allan Ramsay's works, Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, a select collection of English songs, and other odd volumes, carefully noting the real from the false in them, while clear Scotch outdoor sunlight illumed the pages and his strong earnest soul.

In his seventeenth year he went to a country dancing-school, much against the will of his father, who contracted a kind of dislike for Robert henceforth. On Sundays he attended Tarbolton church, making "a conspicuous figure with the only tied hair in the parish." It was new Scotch, tainted with the French Mugwumpism of the period. After services he would linger in front of the church doors and discuss the doctrine of the sermon in loud tones. He panted for distinction, and was not vexed overmuch with genteel or shrinking timidities. It was far from an angel in disguise.

His life flowed on much in the same course till his twenty-third year. His heart was "completely tinder," and was "eternally lighted by some fair goddess or other." He was the confidant, too, of half the lovers of the neighborhood. Through it all he was perpetually concerned about himself. The family name had been written Burnes and Burness. In his twenty-eighth year Robert fixed it as Burns, and there it stays. He was the best talker in the village,—made himself feared for his tongue. Later, duchesses were carried off their feet by the same power that the villagers feared. He would crush weaker men to their faces, without mercy, and, it is whispered, would say cutting things behind their backs. Naturally, his amorous passions and his conquering self-assertive manners made him fascinating to the women who came in his way,—made him, too, something of a Don Juan in himself, with a "vanity of showing his parts in courtship," and his ability as a writer of love-letters.

When the father, William Burns, died, "his all went among the hell-hounds that prowl in the kennel of Justice." Robert and his brother Gilbert rented a farm, and our poet set out to be careful and wise. Bad seed; bad season; sleepless nights; melancholy; unnatural and natural instincts chained or overused, a constant battering of himself into a whim-affection for some

country-girl, and a new poem as the net result, rendered the farming project a failure, and wisdom was never learned.

He now began to be known in the neighborhood as a maker of rhymes; began to be talked about in the Ayrshire Academy as holding infidel or lax views about religion; began to feel his own importance as a member of the human race, and hence contributed "The Holy Fair" and "Holy Willie's Prayer" to the immortal impertinent poetic sarcasms of the ages. Here are a couple of glimpses:

"O thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for ony guid or ill
They've done afore thee!
I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
For gifts an' grace,
A burnin' an' a shinin' light
To a' this place."*

* * * * * * * *

"How monie hearts this day converts,
O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane gin night are gane
As saft as onie flesh is.

* First verse of "Holy Willie's Prayer."

There's some are fou o' love divine;
There's some are fou o' brandy;
An' monie jobs that day begin,
May end in Houghmagandie
Some ither day."*

They are his earliest strong productions. Both poems are as full of envy as they are of a flashing insight into the hypocrisies and vulgarities of so-called religious human nature, and can only be justified on the ground that in those days, as often before and since, very much of the devil had gotten into the Lord's clothes, which therefore had to be well shaken.

Burns had compared himself with the strongest men that came in his way, and saw that they were but playthings in his hands if he chose so to use them. Naturally, his native pride and his passions took him in directions where pride is humbled or its victim destroyed. In his case the humbling and the destruction both came like whirlwinds, with soft, fine flashes of splendor and of music between the storms.

From the age of twenty-five to thirty his presence shone and trembled with magnetic life and beauty, and the marvel is that he kept his feet as long as he did.

A horse of such superior mettle would have been petted in idleness, fed on the finest grain,

* Last verse of "The Holy Fair."

kept in padded stalls, provided with the daintiest luxuries and gratifications, and only now and then allowed to test its splendid powers. But, being a man, like ninety-nine per cent. of all superior men, Burns was fed on shorts and chaff, strapped in harness that galled and fretted him, set to common cart-horse drudgery, and damned by the unheroic hypocrisy of a hide-bound, moribund, asphyxiated, starched, and padded generation; and, led by vanity, passion, and hatred, he blundered and fell beyond repair.

> "But yet the light that led astray
> Was light from heaven."*

So verily no lie can live, though it be covered with temples of broadcloth or veiled with roseate clouds of genius and love. Truth and honor are your only divinities, and genius and love turned to passion will be the first and the last to confess the crime of any swerving from the orbits of these pole-stars. And, divine charity!—thou infinite angel, forever brooding over and blessing and saving the world! what would genius and the wide world be were it not for thee? Still,—

> "It's hardly in a body's pow'r
> To keep at times frae being sour
> To see how things are shar'd."†

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* "The Vision," Robert Burns.

† Burns's "Epistle to Davie."

GENIUS IN SHAME.

The world is full of spoiled Edens. Burns, too, must try and fail. No sin was ever yet committed but more than one soul was to blame. Take it up carefully, my friends. If your own thoughts were revealed, if your own desires known, where would you be? Had you been born with his fire in your blood, with his beauty and hence with flowers everywhere ready to be plucked! "Don Juanism"? "Judge not, that ye be not judged." The thought of the ages is just, and every man gets measure for measure at the close of the story. No man must apologize for Robert Burns's blunders. Nature cut the splendid fellow down like a faded weed. Nature is just. But let no cold-blooded, careful, world-wise, easy gentleman sit in judgment on this hard-pressed, fascinating, bewildered and bewildering, splendid man.

With his farm-life, schooling, industrious readings, special efforts at one trade and another, love-makings, and fugitive poems, Burns had stumbled along to early manhood. He had learned that the careful, niggardly ways of economy, however praiseworthy in others, were not the ways for him. He lacked the heroism to choose such ways.

It was also clear to him that his life could not be given to the ordinary labors of dicker and trade. Nature had made that impossible. Poetry

and love were all he really knew. Martyrdom was not a part of his religion. A primal, rude devoutness, and a contempt for cant, with some sense of manly honor when in a scrape, but not of the kind that keeps a man out of scrapes, were the only piety he professed or respected. The old standards of Sinai and the nearer mountain had been set up as scarecrows by all the churches, and, instead of being scared, Burns had laughed at them and covered with ridicule the priests and elders that had erected the same. In his merriment he had forgotten that back of all scarecrows and strained dogmas is a law that laughs at the laugher and trips every fool in his folly, no matter how smart and good-natured the fool may be.

In his contempt for the artificial social laws that padded human apes with luxury and covered their beastly sins, he had forgotten that there were social laws which the gifted of all men, like Christs in the desert, were bound to obey. He took nature alone for guide, and, naturally, never learned the lessons which have been taught only by those who have conquered nature in order to divine her secrets and sing her clearest songs.

Poor Burns! poor Jean Armour! Here is the story. On the night of Mauchline races, 1785, the young men and women of the place joined in a penny ball, according to their custom. In the same set danced Jean Armour, the master-

mason's daughter, and Robert Burns. His dog, apparently sensible of some neglect, followed his master to and fro, to the confusion of the dancers. Some mirthful comments followed; and Jean heard the poet say to his partner—or laughingly launch the remark to the company at large—that "he wished he could get any of the lasses to like him as well as his dog." Some time after, as Jean was bleaching clothes on Mauchline green, Robert chanced to go by, still accompanied by his dog; and the dog, "scouring in long excursion," scampered with four black paws across the linen. This brought the two into conversation; when Jean, with a somewhat hoydenish advance, inquired "if he had yet got any of the lasses to like him as well as his dog." Burns accepted the provocation.

Later on, Father Armour, finding his daughter ruined by this supremest man of the age, insisted that for Jean to marry her reckless lover was in no sense to mend their crime or their shame. Many a deacon in the church to-day, many a respectable citizen, has blundered just where Burns blundered, and without half his excuse, but, having assumed the burden of his folly, has been forgiven of Gods and men. It was the one supreme crisis in Robert Burns's life; and, to his eternal honor be it said, he bore it like a man,—thirsted and longed to do right. Being piqued, he at first swore, by heaven and hell, he would not marry or own the girl that

had fallen a prey to their mutual desires; but yet purposed in his heart to marry her, and, by a law of fate stronger than his will, was obliged to do so, and die for it, too.

Had Jean Armour's father been human here, or had Jean herself manifested any heroism, loyalty to, or confidence in her lover, there is every reason to believe that Burns's life had been a quieter, perhaps a victorious one. But all ifs are sheer madness. She was puppet to a father's threats, a prey to another fancy all the while, and palpably had no soul worthy the man she had helped to joy and shame. And Burns, not allowed to marry or even visit the woman whose condition gave her an eternal claim on his protection, at last, seeing all the depths of misery brought into life by social infidelity, lost the chart and mistook the reckoning of reason, ceased to laugh and ridicule the law and the church, and himself went "skulking from covert to covert, under the terrors of a jail, as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at his heels."

His reason for the time being had fled; and in that light here is another picture. "The universe could not be yet exhausted; there must be hope and love waiting for him somewhere; and so, with his head down, this poor, insulted poet ran once more upon his fate. There was an innocent and gentle Highland nursery-maid at service in a

neighboring family; and he had soon battered himself and her into a warm affection and a secret engagement. Jean's marriage-lines had not been destroyed till March 13, 1786; yet all was settled between Burns and Mary Campbell by Sunday, May 14, when they met for the last time and said farewell with rustic solemnities upon the banks of Ayr. They each wet their hands in a stream, and, standing one on either bank, held a Bible between them as they vowed eternal faith. Then they exchanged Bibles, on one of which Burns, for greater security, had inscribed texts as to the binding nature of an oath; and surely, if ceremony can do aught to fix the wandering affections, here were two people united for life. Mary came of a superstitious family, so that she perhaps insisted on these rites; but they must have been eminently to the taste of Burns at this period; for nothing would seem superfluous and no oath great enough to stay his tottering constancy," his shattered mind.

To Robert Burns henceforth life was no longer a mockery of the foibles and moonshine of other lives. Life was to him, as sooner or later it is to every man not utterly sunk in shameless greed or shameless vanity or sensuality, a battle for self-respect and a clear way through the world. In all his dear Scotland there appeared to be no thoroughfare for him. He gave up his part of the farm to his brother and made what preparations he could

to sail for Jamaica and begin life over again. He had no money to secure a passage, and was contemplating indenturing himself to work his way, when the happy stars combined to guide him in quite another direction.

All the passions, all the misery of his nature having been wrought into the seething process by the Armour trouble, the first thing before sailing for Jamaica was to quiet himself by writing a poem or two, putting the matter down for posterity to judge as it would. The first of these poems, called "The Lament," appears in some modern versions with the following explanation as a subtitle, "Occasioned by the unfortunate issue of a friend's amour."

It is one of the most labored and unnatural of Burns's productions. Perhaps his heart, or what now stood for it, was not half as much in this Jean Armour affair as some other passions of uglier names. But the first and fifth stanzas of the Lament have lines of considerable fire:

"O thou pale orb, that silent shines
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch that inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With woe I nightly vigils keep,
Beneath thy wan, unwarming beam;
And mourn in lamentation deep,
How *life* and *love* are all a dream.

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"Oh, can she bear so base a heart,
So lost to honor, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part
The plighted husband of her youth?
Alas! life's path may be unsmooth!
Her way may lie thro' rough distress!
Then, who her pangs and pains will soothe,
Her sorrows share, and make them less?"

His "Farewell to Ayrshire" apparently belongs to the same period, and is a finer piece of work, mainly because it treats of Burns's own misery and leaves Jean out of the question:

"Scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure,
Scenes that former thoughts renew,
Scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure,
Now a sad and last adieu!

"Bonnie Doon, sae sweet and gloamin,
Fare thee weel before I gang!
Bonnie Doon, where, early roamin',
First I weaved the *rustic sang!*"

The rustic song and the singer were not, however, to leave their native land under that sort of cloud. Before leaving for Jamaica,—in fact, while making his modest preparations for leaving,—Burns determined to get a little volume of his poems published. He had already secured subscriptions for three hundred copies—not three hundred subscriptions, but money-subscriptions for that num-

ber—from a few admiring patrons of genius. So he had an edition of six hundred printed, now known as the Kilmarnock edition, and a new turn in his affairs, a new dawning in his life, was at once unrolled. Not the rustic Ayrshire lads and lasses, but the entire learned Scotch-English world, and the whole round earth, were soon to be his. So, after all, poets, like other men, and dogs, can only take and keep what they deserve either of honor or shame.

GENIUS ON STILTS.

To the central figure of the drama, and to the inner, esoteric circle of admirers admitted to see the show, there is nothing in all this world half so entertaining as the first public recognized elevation of a gifted man or woman. There is something in human magnetism. After nearly a generation of whimperings, puzzlings, readings, thinkings, sighings, blunders, despairs, not to speak of shameful disgraces, madnesses, murky, foul days, broken only by lightning-flashes of the strong man's thoughts and will, to emerge into the light of day, full of clear blue sun-splendor, with six hundred volumes of poems called after your name, and all the brightest dames and scholars of your nation gazing at you in glad, proud admiration,—it is a circumstance known only to those who

have stood firmly through it all and then have looked back over it with infinite amusement.

This "first edition" of six hundred copies of Burns's earlier poems marks the high-tide and glory period of his existence. Ayrshire rang with praises of the ploughman poet. It was a new kind of praise, even for the critics and the usual admirers of literary talent. The poems bore a new fire in their hearts; men's souls were stirred as they read, and women's hearts felt a strange delight. The first edition was soon exhausted, and Burns, with a well-earned twenty pounds in his purse, was about starting for Edinburgh to get out a second edition.

At home, at Mossgiel Farm, it was not all peace and sunshine. Jean Armour about this time was brought to bed of twins,—a boy and a girl. By an amicable arrangement the Burnses took the boy to bring up by hand, while the girl remained with her mother. One day, as Robert was standing by the window, drumming on the panes with his fingers, poetic money in his pocket, his illegitimate son sleeping in the cradle near by, and poetic praises streaming in joyously through the morning sun, a letter came addressed with his name. He took it, read it, and left the room and the house in utter silence. Years after it was found that this letter announced the death of Highland Mary, and so took out of Robert's life the one beautiful

sentiment that came to him immediately after the Armours had acted like the senseless slaves they naturally were.

Burns had maltreated Love's angel from the start, and plainly there was to be no inner rest from its ministry. Years afterwards he visited the girl's mother, and left her with the impression that he was a "real warm-hearted chield." Warm-hearted! Heavens! had there been a heart strong enough to command his, what unutterable burning joys there "might have been"! Possibly his indiscretion was the cause of Highland Mary's death, and so another victim and another flaming sword lurked and flashed defiance in his way.

The Edinburgh project and a second edition were still under way, and a month after Burns received this letter of death he started on a pony he had borrowed from a friend. On this very journey he struck up a flirtation with some fair enchantress, and carried the business so far that on his next visit to town he was to spend two days with her. At Edinburgh he met Dugald Stewart, Blair, "Duchess Gordon and all the gay world," still wearing his boots and buckskins, his blue coat and waistcoat striped with buff and blue, like a Scotch farmer in his Sunday best; a burly figure, standing solid on massive legs, his large dark eyes literally glowing as he spoke, so that even Walter Scott has said, "I never saw such

another eye in a human head,"—Sir Walter himself little dreaming of the inward fires that gave those eyes their burning, kindling, glowing power. Burns stood five feet ten inches in his shoes, his face finely moulded, sunburnt and bronzed, with dark curly hair that fell carelessly over his forehead.

With men, whether lords or critics, at Edinburgh he was well at home; dignified, polite, but not cringing. He was their peer in any sense; himself peerless in his own sense. "These gentlemen," said he, "remind me of spinsters in my country who spin their thread so fine that it is neither fit for weft nor woof." With the fine ladies at Edinburgh Burns was far less at home. He had played Don Juan with country lasses, and his habits had disqualified him for the companionship of women who knew the world. One lady, who met him at a ball, gave Chambers a speaking sketch of his demeanor. "His manner was not prepossessing, — scarcely, she thinks, manly or natural. It seemed as if he affected a rusticity or *laudertness*, so that when he said the music was 'bonnie, bonnie,' it was like the expression of a child." These would be company manners; and doubtless on a slight degree of intimacy the affectation would grow less. And his talk to women had always "a turn either to the pathetic or humorous which engaged the attention particularly."

On the whole, the Edinburgh "gay world" behaved well to Burns. His sins had followed him. His reputation was badly tainted. But they took his heaven-born genius to such hearts as they had, gave him good advice, supplied him with some five hundred pounds in English money, and made his life there an ovation; in a word, did all that could be done for so strong and mentally self-respecting a man. And Burns, on his part, bore it well: was not spoiled; was, in fact, immensely set upon his feet and aided thereby.

On his return from Edinburgh, now a recognized force in Scotch literature, his mother welcomed him with unutterable, proud, glad, holy admiration, and the Armour family treated him with slavish attentions. Father, mother, and Jean herself were full of all compliance with his desires. Proof of this was soon forthcoming in Jean's condition. It should not be said that Burns took advantage of her weakness; they took advantage of each other, and were equally to blame. With both life had fallen to a sentimental passion; so much so that its effects had been to wellnigh ruin his propensity of falling in love. "My heart no more glows with feverish rapture; I have now no paradisiacal evening interviews;" a sad enough confession for an unmarried man twenty-eight years old.

To this period apparently belongs his poem to

J. S., the following three verses of which are too good to lose here:

"This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted, fairy land,
Where Pleasure is the magic wand
That, wielded right,
Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

"The magic wand then let us wield;
For, ance that five-an'-forty's speel'd,
See crazy, weary, joyless Eild,
Wi' wrinkled face,
Comes hostin, hirplin owre the field,
Wi' creepin pace.

"When ance *Life's day* draws near the gloamin,
Then fareweel vacant careless roamin;
An' fareweel cheerfu' tankards foamin,
An' social noise;
An' fareweel dear, deluding *woman*,
The joy of joys!"

The lost sense was only temporary; in fact, it was only changing its form of expression. Having no longer to deal with country lasses, a new intellectual sense rose to guide his heart with women of better training and larger minds. He had supplied Jean with money, had installed her in comfortable lodgings, and had prevailed on Mrs. Armour to promise her help and countenance in the approaching confinement. Kind, of course;

but this is the way he himself describes it in writing to a new female friend: "I have taken her a room; I have taken her to my arms; I have given her a mahogany bed; I have given her a guinea . . . I swore her privately and solemnly never to attempt any claim on me as a husband, even though anybody should persuade her she had such a claim,—which she has not, neither during my life nor after my death. She did all this like a good girl." And he did it all like a cold-blooded scoundrel.

Meantime, while Jean was bringing his and her third child into the world, he had wrought himself into a warm affection for one Miss Chambers, a lady this time, of fine figure and elegant manners, who had seen the politest quarters of Europe, but had never seen such eyes as his. With Miss Chambers he ventured too far, was repulsed, played old hawk till he could pounce on his prey, and by his own confessions in letters of this period proved himself simply the wretched moral viper he had become. Six months after his episode with Miss Chambers, Burns, back in Edinburgh again, is served with a writ *in meditatione fugæ*, on behalf of some Edinburgh fair one, probably of humble rank, who declared an intention of adding to his family.

If the man could only have been chained to a grindstone in those years and treated to a cold

bath every morning, or even a cowhiding, a different tale might have been eventually told, and a different song now ringing in the ears of the world. But heaven's logic would have been lost in an unworthy victory, and that in no case can be, no matter what sons of song and beauty die in disgrace on the way.

In this very winter of 1787, Burns met at a tea-party one Mrs. Agnes McLehose, about his own age, a married woman with two children, but deserted by her husband. She had wit, experience; had read Goethe's Werther; was full of sympathy for Burns's position; thought of Jean Armour as a reckless lass whose children were the fruits of culpable indiscretion; was herself in almost as bad a fix socially, but standing well in the eyes of her own circle; above all, hungry-hearted, intellectual, and quick of sight. Burns had dawned on her only to arouse and captivate her heart and being. They played with the fire like unburnt children; wrote mere childish love-letters to each other almost daily; were mutually delighted, happy, charmed. Like Swift and his Stella, they wrote to each other under assumed names, Sylvander and Clarinda, both apparently approaching nearer to the real mystery of love than either ever before or afterwards attained.

Writing to his Clarinda of Jean Armour at this period, Burns said, "I this morning called on a

certain woman. I am disgusted with her; I cannot endure her;" and he accused her of "tasteless insipidity, vulgarity of soul, and mercenary fawning;" and his terrible earnestness here will forever condition and interpret his earlier and later poems to Jean. This was already in March; by the 13th of that month he was back in Edinburgh. On the 17th he wrote to Clarinda, "Your hopes, your fears, your cares, my love, are mine; so don't mind them. I will take you in my hand through the dreary wilds of this world, and scare away the ravening bird or beast that would annoy you." Again, on the 21st, "Will you open, with satisfaction and delight, a letter from a man who loves you, who has loved you, and who will love you, to death, through death, and forever? . . . How rich am I to have such a treasure as you! . . . 'The Lord God knoweth,' and, perhaps, 'Israel he shall know,' my love and your merit. Adieu, Clarinda! I am going to remember you in my prayers." By the 7th of April, seventeen days later, he had already decided to make Jean Armour publicly his wife. But who can fail to see the difference in quality between his regard for Clarinda and Jean? The one was ennobling in itself, the other debasing, and they will so continue to the end of time, though Burns was in duty bound to the weaker woman and the lower passion of the two.

It was no stage trick. Gleams of sound sense made their way through his deranged passions now and then. He saw that Clarinda could be no more to him than she then was; saw that his own life could not go on as it had been going; had once more, by some unknown divine ministry, been brought to resolve to be a man. He saw that fate had already forced him into that hard choice, not between right and wrong, but between two or three wrongs. He chose the nearest to right that he could. Jean could only be his willing slave. But a man who had chosen a nice armful of human flesh instead of any single course of loyal love or duty must be content to live with slaves or beat his soul to shreds, which at last he did. He married finally for duty, near as he could ever make out that word; married beneath his heart and soul and eyes; married what he had already destroyed; and so slowly drank himself through heart-break and madness into the saddest grave ever cut into the crust of this world.

As for Clarinda, she may well have been satisfied with the fondnesses Burns gave her while her spell kept him at her side, and with the following verses, such as few women have ever inspired:

"Clarinda, mistress of my soul,
The measured time is run!
The wretch beneath the dreary pole
So marks his latest sun.

"To what dark cave of frozen night
Shall poor Sylvander hie,
Deprived of thee, his life and light,
The sun of all his joy?

"We part—but by these precious drops
That fill thy lovely eyes!
No other light shall guide my steps
Till thy bright beams arise.

"She, the fair sun of all her sex,
Has blest my glorious day;
And shall a glimmering planet fix
My worship to its ray?"

In this world her bright beams never did arise. As a matter of fact, she steadily forgot all about Robert Burns, lived to a good old age, and concerned herself about her children and the salvation of her own soul,—a highly necessary work, no doubt; and what their glimmering planets are now doing must still remain a conjecture for a time.

GENIUS IN CHAINS.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Nature makes no exceptions in favor of genius; nor is she more severe with her highest than with her lowliest and meanest men. Burns was the victim of two passions: amorousness and poetry. The one sapped his life-blood, turned it to mere foam and water, broke his energy and spirit, and covered him with shame and an un-

timely grave. The other has crowned him with an immortality utterly peculiar in kind and degree, and as yet uncomprehended and undefined. Hard as it seemed to him at the time, the fate that tore him away from his contemplated fidelity to Clarinda and tied him to Jean Armour for life, though it sent him headlong to his grave, was plainly the kindest thing fate had in store for him. Fidelity or constancy of any kind from any sense of duty was impossible to him. He had laughed at conscience till it in turn mocked him with unutterable scorn. Fidelity to Clarinda at this juncture, with deserted Jean and her babies crying in his ears, would have been the veriest mockery of madness. But as a married man, living with some semblance of duty to his wife and children, the world has infinitely more respect for him than it would have had in case he had deserted Jean and their children in some frantic effort to be loyal to the grass-widow who had captured him when he was broken in heart and mind.

In 1788, Burns and Jean Armour were publicly married, and went to live on his rented farm of Ellisland, on the banks of the Nith, six miles above Dumfries. Once more Burns meant to be careful and wise. Jean, now Mrs. Burns, though it seems a mockery to write it, was patient, dutiful, attentive, compliant; but Burns did not, could not love her, or even respect her. Jean's virtues

were all wasted on him. Their union had no root in nature. It was mere weakness and sentiment from the start on both sides. But the children were not to blame, and their creators were bound to parental responsibility. To all appearances Jean was contented enough, as, in heaven's name, she well might be, with the most splendid man of the age chained to her kitchen-hearth and her apron-strings. With Burns it was far otherwise. By nature and habit inconstant, he could not now learn constancy except through love. It is doubtful if any man or woman ever has. And his fancy for Jean and her fancy for him must be called by some other name. I do not forget that she, later on, took one of his illegitimate children and rocked it to sleep in the cradle beside her own. I do not forget Burns's many beautiful lines to Jean, among which perhaps the following are the richest:

"Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And monie a hill between;
But day and night, my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

"I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair:
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:

There's not a bonnie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean."

But in these, as in the rest, it is some charm of her person or voice or manner that touches his fancy and of which he sings, while the great seething love-tides of his soul are unmoved. Those who have ever loved will know the difference. Those who have not will not know.

The success of his second edition had given him money, and with it he had travelled through the Highlands, dabbled in pleasure, lived a life of ease for a year or more, frittering most of his heart away on Clarinda; and when he at last came again to farm-work or to letters, he found himself without the old power of abandon to labor in the fields, and without the old power of concentrated mental application. Clarinda, the woods, and other pleasure had acted like leeches, and the poet ploughman was now a broken-nerved, wayward, shirking, uncertain man of the world: gleams of manhood and of soul-splendor bursting out now and then; but clearly those inner forces that make any life, most of all a poet's life, worth living had been eaten away.

Soon after his marriage he again took to regretting Highland Mary in verses of some fervor, poetry, and love. He also resumed a question-

able correspondence with Clarinda, placed himself in too intimate relations with a Mrs. Riddle, and was guilty of serious indiscretions with one Anne Park, the nature of which may be gathered from the following lines:

"Yestreen I had a pint o' wine,
A place where body saw na;
Yestreen lay on this breast o' mine
The raven locks of Anna.

"The hungry Jew, in wilderness,
Rejoicing o'er his manna,
Was naething to my honey bliss
Upon the lips of Anna.

"Ye monarchs, take the east and west,
Frae Indus to Savannah,
Gie me within my straining grasp
The melting form of Anna."

Toward Jean, before and after his marriage, he felt some sentimental fancy and sense of duty; with Annie Park and other bright trusting girls he gave himself up to an utter abandon of sensual passion, regardless of consequences; toward Highland Mary there was ever in him a touch of pure and tender affection, manifest enough in the following first verse of the beautiful lines called "Afton Water:"

"Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream;"

and toward Clarinda there was from the start something in him approaching the clear abandon of an unselfish manly love; that is, of the only thing in man or woman which is worthy the name.

But let the world beware how it blames. At home there was no deep satisfaction. And women then, and always, were fond of such lips and eyes as his.

In the autumn of 1789 Burns was appointed exciseman, with a salary from the government of fifty pounds a year. Later this was increased to seventy-five pounds. And on all sides it is admitted that, while "in everything else he was a perfect gentleman, when he met with anything seizable he was no better than any other gauger." In a word, he did his whole common duty by the government. But the age itself was ill at ease. In France the Revolution was just beating itself into fury. The rights of man were everywhere asserting themselves as far above the duties of man. In our own country, Boston harbor had seen sights only a little less heroic than those of Cromwell's own day. Our Declaration of Independence and our constitution and negro slavery were all seething in the caldron of time. Out of his work as a gauger of beer-barrels, out of his miseries as a husband and father without a home, out of his flirtations with Clarinda and the rest, Burns looked daily a little into the great battling

world. And plainly there is much in this period of his life that has not yet been explained.

Already in 1788 he had, with strange, prophetic insight, written, "I dare say the American Congress in 1776 will be allowed to be as able and as enlightened as the English Convention was in 1688; and that their posterity will celebrate the centenary of their deliverance from us as duly and sincerely as we do ours from the oppressive measures of the wrong-headed house of Stewart."

In the same spirit he wrote,—

"Here's freedom to him that wad read,
Here's freedom to him that wad write;
There's nane ever feared that the truth should be heard
But them whom the truth wad indite."

On February 27, 1792, he took part in the capture of an armed smuggler, bought at the subsequent sale four carronades, and despatched them with a letter to the French Assembly. Letter and guns were stopped at Dover by the English officials; there was trouble for Burns with his superiors; he was reminded firmly, however delicately, that, as a paid official, it was his duty to obey and to be silent. In a word, Burns himself was a slave. For a paltry fifty pounds a year, the government of England had the dauntless impudence to expect not only the labor of this man's hands, but the cringing bondage of his soul, though that soul

alone was worth more than all the palaces, kings, and statesmen of the generation. Though a lover of mankind, of truth, and of freedom, Burns was no socialist, mere ranter, or infidel, as witness the following lines:

"The wretch that wad a tyrant own,
And the wretch, his true-born brother,
Who would set the *mob* aboon the throne,
May they be d—n'd together!
Who will not sing, 'God save the King,'
Shall hang as high's the steeple;
But while we sing, 'God save the King,'
We'll ne'er forget the People."

Already measuring the world's future estimate by the facts of the hour, he had written that no doubt some hack scribbler of the future would say that "Burns, notwithstanding the *fanfaronnade* of independence to be found in his works, and after having been held forth to view and to public estimation as a man of some genius, yet, quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, dwindled into a paltry exciseman, and shrunk out the rest of his insignificant existence in the meanest of pursuits and among the vilest of mankind."

In truth, the morality of the age having grown constantly looser from Burns's days till now, the hack scribbler has been inclined all the other way. Having lost the faculty of worshipping at Sinai or

Calvary, the hack scribbler has fastened himself to almost any Olympus or Parnassus that has risen out of the utter commonplace of democracy, and among the rest he has crowded Burns into a Walhalla of heroes very much in need of assortment.

The farm of Ellisland would not work. Burns made frequent trips from it to his folks at Mossgiel. His business as exciseman kept him frequently on the road, and, as a matter of fact, he was often the companion of tavern-hostlers and the riff-raff that hang about country inns; but always above them, their admired hero for the time. Though he did not know it, he was a thoroughly humbled and broken man, and all his steps were downward toward an untimely grave. He had often chosen solitude and the inspiration of his own genius in preference to the companionship of the most cultured people of the land. He now was glad of a chat with any of the herd that did not detect his shattered manhood, and who saw only those gleams of power in him that were so superior to their own.

In the year 1791 the farm was finally abandoned, and Burns took his little family to Dumfries, resolved at last to try that pinching way of economy which he spurned in early life, before any serious thought of duty had entered his mind. He would live on his modest salary at Dumfries, roam no more, and see what might come. Alas!

there were only five years left to him. But, spite of all the drawbacks of those years, Jean and the babies taking all he could earn, and giving next to nothing in return; tavern sprees still sapping the life that was left; the great world far off; real companionship as good as lost, and the ghost of death bewildering him all the while, Burns wrote in these last few years songs and poems of matchless incarnate human power and beauty, sure of an unsullied and deathless immortality.

GENIUS TRIUMPHANT.

The last period of Burns's life really began with his fixed purpose to marry Jean Armour and make some attempt at being a man. It in fact marks the one poor struggle of his life toward duty, and hence some of the poems of this period, though perhaps written immediately after drunken sprees, are touched with those elements of universal power that place them among the masterpieces of the race. Many efforts have been made to trace a change in Burns's style during the period of his intimacy with Clarinda. But no success can attend these pretensions. All his life was the same, only in some other cases the women were less intellectual, and perhaps less worthy. His best work was always done at intervals, in lucid, intense moments, and never by any concentrated continuous labor. What art he had was as in-

spired as his genius. But toward the end, as worldly ambition weakened before the preludes of death, he took more pains with his work, preferring a half a dozen perfect lines to a dozen in which flaws could be found. In a word, true art began with him about the age that it begins with most men or women of tremendous energies, after the surgings of youth and passion have died away. And the work he did in this last period gives us a better idea of what he might have done, had he conquered himself, than we can ever gather from any of the work of his earlier years.

"Afton Water," which has become a part of world-wide sentiment, belongs to this late period; and "Auld Lang Syne," the Bohemian's immortal "Home Sweet Home" of all nations, was done so sacredly, so daintily, in those days, that Burns said he "found it,"—as he did, but in his own lonely and uncompanioned soul. "Tam O'Shanter" was also written between 1787 and 1792, and fits the picture of this later life. "Bannockburn," that is, his undying

"Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,"

was born in the last five years of his life, and is in itself a fadeless glory.

During his whole career he was barely able to keep from starvation. The other day I read in a newspaper that the recent sale of the manu-

script of two of Robert Burns's poems — one of them "Tam O'Shanter"—for one hundred and fifty-two pounds does not indicate that the Scottish bard's works have reached that favored position in the eye of collectors which enables them to command the extravagant price recently paid for some of Keats's or Charles Lamb's letters. First editions of Burns's published poems have, however, long been in request at high prices, the one volume printed at Kilmarnock in 1786 having been sold as high as three hundred dollars. So wise and yet so eternally cruel and stupid is this slow and cultured world: always waking up long after the morning has dawned and died away.

In the month of June, 1796, Burns removed to Brow in Annandale, about ten miles from Dumfries, to try the effects of sea-bathing. Here he was invited to dinner by a lady in the neighborhood, Mrs. Riddle, with whom he had quarrelled and become reconciled; and, as he was unable to walk, she sent her carriage for him to the cottage where he lodged. As he entered her apartment the stamp of death seemed imprinted on his features. He appeared already touching the brink of eternity. His first salutation was, "Well, madam, have you any commands for the other world?" He ate little, and complained of having entirely lost the tone of his stomach. Wine, women, and song had done their work. But he was brave to the last.

"Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Though they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human."

It is useless to compare Burns's life and work with those of any other poet that has ever lived. Edgar Allan Poe is the only man that comes within millions of miles of Burns's peculiar genius, weakness, and power. But the differences are countless, eternal, and absolute. He was the new birth-star of a new world yet to be tried and utterly condemned. But men who trust in riches and ballot-boxes can hardly understand these things.

On July 21st, 1796, Robert Burns died, as far as such men can ever die. And though the "Mountain Daisy" is credited to him ten years earlier,—say at the time of Highland Mary's death,—as being one of the most beautiful and characteristic things ever written, we will let its first verse sing the requiem to this poor story:

"Wee, modest, crimson-tippit flow'r,
Thou'st met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now is past my power,
Thou bonnie gem."

I say 'tis lust's, not error's hand,
That still cuts life's heart in twain;
And wouldst thou in God's daylight stand,
Pluck passion from thy brain.

V.

THOMAS CARLYLE.*

'The mason's ways are
A type of existence,
And his persistence
Is as the days are
Of men in this world."

BORN in comparative poverty, designed for the Scotch ministry, an unbeliever in the accepted creeds of Christendom, unhappily married, but grandly loyal to duty, truth, and honor, and of commanding intellect, Thomas Carlyle is long destined to stand forth as one of the greatest men of all times. In Mr. Froude's first two volumes tracing the early days of Carlyle, his student life, his courtship and marriage, the great Scotchman was in the main his own editor. Those volumes brought Thomas and his Jane to Chelsea, set them up in housekeeping there, and traced their history to the death of Edward Irving, making little rifts of revelation not yet understood. On the whole, the work read like fiction and increased the thirst for more.

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* Written in review of Mr. Froude's Memoirs of Carlyle, 1885.

In due time came the letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle, with a good deal more of Mr. Froude's editing, and either to intensify the thirst for the books or out of a commendable though questionable gallantry, all the weight of the editor's influence favored the woman in the fearful revelations made. It was neither just to history nor to the two chosen dead. The reading world flew to abusing the ablest man of the century, and all out of mere sympathy aroused by a prejudiced statement of the facts. Reviewers and the great public went with the editor for the time, and only here and there it was said that a change of temper and a change of verdict would come. It has come, and, first of all, where it ought to have come, in the mind and work of Mr. Froude, as is clearly seen in the last two volumes of this notable revelation.

The two volumes containing the letters of Jane Carlyle touched the life at Chelsea from 1834 to 1866 and closed with the death of Mrs. Carlyle. The two volumes last published cover the same period, extending the time to Carlyle's death, on February 5, 1881, when, as Mr. Froude says on seeing him the last time, those eyes which had pierced so many shams "were as if they did not see."

In this doubled and prejudiced arrangement of the material one gets the impression of having read the same things before and of having been

unfairly dealt with. No doubt Mr. Froude himself noticed this, for in the final volumes throughout the reader will hardly fail to perceive a greater sense of restraint both in the matter published and in the editorial comment, also a sometimes painful sense of laboring on the part of the editor to right the wrong done in the previous volumes by at last offering some special pleading on Carlyle's account, and occasionally throwing the blame of his admitted violent bursts of temper over on the shoulders of the wife, who failed to soothe the storm-tossed existence of her husband, as, if she had really loved him,—as he supposed when their union began,—she could and would have done.

No human being ought to read Mr. Froude's two volumes of "Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle" who had not previously read the same author's memoirs of the first forty years of the life of Thomas Carlyle. Like the finest, hence the hardest, portions of fossil rocks, the Carlyles will live when the society of which they formed a part has perished and is forgotten. And there are atoms of truth in some of the earlier memoirs that are absolutely necessary to a right understanding of the condition of things found in some of the letters of Mrs. Carlyle.

In dealing with such true souls as Carlyle and his wife it is not gallantry, but truth and insight

that are needed. Mr. Froude says Carlyle "ought to have managed his friendships better." If Mr. Froude had one-millionth part of Carlyle's genius he would know how utterly impossible a thing that was, always has been, and always will be. Manage such women as Harriet Martineau, with her ear-trumpet and ingenuous coquetry; and Mrs. Pierce Butler, with her riding-whip and sorely-disappointed heart and charming admiration; and Lady Ashburton, with her brilliant, rich, and fascinating nature? Let a man be capable of winning such admirations before he talks of managing them. Can Mr. Froude manage the east wind and those horrid English fogs? The sympathetic reviewer and sympathetic namby-pambyism, everywhere, echoing Mr. Froude's sentimentalism, cries, "Unhappy Mrs. Carlyle," and then proceeds to pick such passages out of her letters as to the utter shallow intellect imply that Carlyle was a heartless wretch, when eighty of the cleanest and intensest years ever lived by mortal man prove the contrary.

Were the reputations of the Carlyles to be transient, the misfortune would be that their letters to one another were ever published, for beyond question the first verdict was against the truth and against the greatest man of his age—as usual. But time will do its true work here as elsewhere, and the ultimate reputation of Thomas Carlyle is

as safe from the touch of ignorant falsehood as is the light of the most distant star.

That, however, Mr. Froude was the best man in England to be intrusted with the work of arranging the material in question, and that it was a most difficult business to undertake and get through with, may all be gathered from Carlyle's own sayings about it, from the fact that he deliberately chose Mr. Froude as the fittest person to be intrusted with it, and also from an intelligent recollection of any other living man near enough to Carlyle to be dreamed of in this connection. If Sterling had lived the world might have had a tragic epic of modern culture with Thomas and Jane Carlyle as hero and heroine, instead of the merely beautiful patchwork coverlid in the six volumes named. But there are no ifs in actual existence, and after Sterling no Englishman of gifted literary turn and with time and strength at hand knew Carlyle half as freely and broadly or deeply as James Anthony Froude.

One has but to glance at the literary lights of London, living or dead, to understand the truth of this statement. The time will come when all these ravelled threads of letters and note-book comment and criticism will be woven in with the accomplished life-work of the man, and for that, too, no doubt, heaven has prepared the writer and the way. Afterwards Carlyle will stand forth at least

as clearly as he himself recreated Cromwell, and gradually all mere dyspeptic ravings will have subsided into their proper oblivion. That Mr. Froude was the best man in England to do this compiling and comment may also be gathered from the extremely thin quality of the various other attempts so far made at giving some picture of the Carlyle existence. And it is but just to say that he deserves the world's gratitude rather than its criticism. The truth is not yet all told.

A REMINISCENCE OR TWO.

In reading Mrs. Carlyle's letters, especially the complaining portions of them, it is very necessary to recall some facts in the early acquaintance of Jane Welsh and Thomas Carlyle, and to note what must have been their inevitable effect on Carlyle's mind and life, though, as far as yet appears, he never breathed it to a human being.

Long after, their acquaintance and friendship had ripened into an intimacy of affection which was a virtual engagement, a virtual marriage; when they were in fact engaged, Carlyle found that Jane Welsh was cherishing her old affection for Edward Irving, famous for his revival of apostolic tongues, and holding a correspondence with him, which—it is not too strong a term to use—she was hiding from her betrothed husband. Carlyle found it out by an accident, questioned Jane, and she confessed,

like the pure, clear, true-hearted woman she was, and quit that dangerous business henceforth forever. But, it is useless to hide it,—a man like Carlyle, once deceived, could never give his absolute and entire trust again, at least not until he had reached his second childhood and was irresponsible. He loved Jane Welsh and desired no woman but her; felt himself in all sacred honor bound to her for life, and was glad of the bondage, but after the fact mentioned, in more than one instance, he offered to release her from all engagements to him. She refused; married him for ambition, as she said; married him knowing that he was an intense, turbid, sick, and burdened man, hard to live with; and because she could not own him, and because he was not and could not become a mild, commonplace blockhead, she was miserable. Blame her not. Blame not him. Each is strong enough, pure enough to bear the full light of truth, and in the end nothing but the fullest light will satisfy the world.

In justice to Carlyle it ought still further to be said, in view of his wife's letters, that during their early married life, long before any other woman's admiration for him had stirred his wife to jealousy, while they were living at Craigenputtock and while Carlyle was suffering all the tortures of unsuccessful literary effort and was time and again insulted by the officious advice of Jeffrey, Mrs.

Carlyle was in such sentimental, confidential, and complaining correspondence and intercourse with her wealthy cousin as did not become the wife of a man who had more worth and soul and thought in his little finger in one hour than Jeffrey had in his whole being in a lifetime. The gods will eventually decide that Irving and Lord Jeffrey, not Lady Ashburton and Harriet Martineau, were the destroyers of the peace of Carlyle's home.

Years after Irving was dead, his apostolic tongues having soon proved too much for him, Jane Welsh Carlyle said, "If Irving had married me there would have been no tongues." But if she was conscious of a power to keep a person like Irving from lunacy, why did she not exert it to keep a man like Carlyle from shutting himself up to a hell of dyspepsia and a room to himself over her head? Better admit at once that love, to such souls at least, is something of a serious mystery which trivial idiots do not fully understand. It is a thankless task even to hint that Eve did her full share of the mischief in this as in other Edens, but it is essential to be just to the dead. There are many other points to be righted, but not here.

JANE AND HER LETTERS.

The letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle reveal her as a clear, vivacious Scotchwoman of a very high

type; of quick intellect; a fine range of sensibilities and susceptibilities; a nature richer in its intellectual than its moral or physical possibilities and adaptabilities. It is a charming study to note the different styles she naturally assumes in writing to Carlyle, to Sterling, to Jeffrey, to Forster, to her uncle in Liverpool. She was really more susceptible and impressionable than fixed in any set conviction or course of life. Her heart really fell from its balance in the Irving affair and never regained itself entirely. She adored Carlyle; she never loved him. Here is the core of the tragedy, and sooner or later all the Froudes in this universe will have to bow before the majesty of that sad truth. Carlyle loved her; and—yes, and—found that she did not command and sustain his whole soul's trust and affection. And he is all the more noble for having till death taken the blame on himself.

Many of these letters are quite in the ordinary vein of those of the average clever woman of good society. A few of them—notably when she lets her whole soul and heart out for the time being into absolute sympathy with and admiration for and trust in her husband—are among the best things ever written by mortal woman to mortal man. It is only so that a woman of her nature can utter all the richness of her life; and the secret of the truth that she did not live this

holy existence constantly must be looked for elsewhere than in the miserable suggestion that Carlyle was imprudent in his friendships. It would be a crime to blame the woman. It is a crime to blame the man. They both did their best, perhaps were more to each other than either could have been to any other human being, all the facts and all the years considered, and each got more out of the other than either could have gotten out of any other human being. If Thomas Carlyle had been an easy-going, smooth-lived, money-getting cousin Jeffrey, and Jane Welsh had married him, she would never have been heard of, except perhaps as a compiler of Sir Walter Scott poetry. It was contact with Carlyle that sharpened her intellect to such edge as has cut the few lines that will live forever. And a man that is possessed with such a demon or angel of blood and labor as Carlyle had is not to be judged by the same standards we apply to common lumps of fat and human bones.

It now turns out that, homely, stiff, and stoic as he was, the brightest women of his age and race loved him and could not help it. It is Shakespeare and Goethe—nonsense. It is human nature over again. Only in Scotch guise, with bad digestion and the ten commandments burnt into the daily breath and blood. Let any man with half such a soul cast the first stone. Was Thomas Carlyle to

play at model domestics or hold to the work all nature laid on him? Should he have turned hack or housekeeper or mere money-getter for his wife's sake? Fortunately, there were no children to make such sacrifice look plausible, and, as a matter of fact, the Carlyles were never as poor as their complainings would imply. And no man, nor even his wife, imprudent and lavish as she was in her unwise criticisms, accuses him of sin. Taking many virtuous women off their feet! Alas! who ever knew such women to stand steady when a man of supreme intellect chanced in their way? They are no more to blame than he is. The marvel is that Carlyle, with all his talk about the blessed silences, ever allowed any of these letters or his own to see the light of day. But that is explained in Mr. Froude's earlier volumes, and there are reasons upon reasons that will yet appear.

Throughout her earlier and later letters it is plain that Mrs. Carlyle was seldom her best—that is, her most agreeable and attractive—in her husband's presence. There was something in him, or something mysterious in the psychological relationship between them; something, perhaps, in the consciousness of the facts referred to, that in a sense overawed her or checked the flow of her more genial qualities. But perhaps it was this fretting, subtle bondage that became a means of

the highest development in her case and his. If she had married Irving or a man like Jeffrey she would forever have dreamed of Carlyle, even though in actual life she had fallen to their little level. There was that in her which could only be satisfied with the highest. And the unutterable agony of their life was not in her sharp complainings, but in the fact that she was not strong enough to fold in silence and in eternal peace the soul she had chosen to adhere to, knowing and seeing all that the step involved. That was her mission. His was in the fields we know. Aches and pains and poverty may soon be forgotten, but to have lost the God-given opportunity of soothing a god-like head, that is a tragedy not wholly understood in these flippant times.

EXTRACTS OF WHITE HEAT.

It is a bitter but sublime tale these letters tell. Early in their married life they took to separate rooms. Carlyle's studies seemed to demand the arrangement. But it has deeper and deeper meanings than that. Writing to Carlyle from Liverpool under date of July 2, 1844, Mrs. Carlyle says, "I am always wondering since I came here how I can, even in my angriest mood, talk about leaving you for good and all; for, to be sure, if I were to leave you to-day on that principle, I should need absolutely to go back to-morrow to see how you were

taking it." But evidently she had often enough talked about leaving him for good and all. Here is a little of the forked lightning that produced such talk. Writing of Carlyle to Sterling, Mrs. Carlyle says,—

"You cannot fancy what way he is making with the fair intellects here! There is Harriet Martineau presents him with her ear-trumpet with a pretty, blushing air of coquetry, which would almost convince me out of belief in her identity! And Mrs. Pierce Butler bolts in upon his studies, out of the atmosphere as it were, in riding-habit, cap and whip (but no shadow of a horse, only a carriage, the whip I suppose being to whip the cushions with, for the purpose of keeping her hand in practice),—my inexperienced Scotch domestic remaining entirely in a nonplus whether she had let in 'a leddy or a gentleman!' And then there is a young American beauty,—such a beauty! 'snow and rose-bloom' throughout, not as to clothes merely, but complexion also; large and soft, and without one idea, you would say, to rub upon another! And this charming creature publicly declares herself his 'ardent admirer,' and I heard her with my own ears call out quite passionately at parting with him, 'Oh, Mr. Carlyle, I want to see you, to talk a long time about "Sartor"!' 'Sartor,' of all things in this world! What could such a young lady have got to say about 'Sartor,'

can you imagine? And Mrs. Marsh, the moving authoress of the 'Old Man's Tales,' reads 'Sartor' when she is ill in bed,—from which one thing at least may be clearly inferred, that her illness is not of the head. In short, my dear friend, the singular author of 'Sartor' appears to me at this moment to be in a perilous position, inasmuch as (with the innocence of a sucking dove to outward appearance) he is leading honorable women, not a few, entirely off their feet. And who can say that he will keep his own? After all, in sober earnest, is it not curious that my husband's writings should be only completely understood and adequately appreciated by women and mad people? I do not know very well what to infer from the fact."

The main question for her was not what to infer but what to do under the circumstances.

Here are two or three flashes touching Carlyle's intimacy with Lady Ashburton that are as sad and bad as anything a sane married woman ever wrote. It was clear that with Lady Ashburton and her friends at Bath House Carlyle was more at home than with any other people he ever met. Mrs. Carlyle was not at home with them: was bitterly jealous.

"*October* 22, 1855.—I was cut short in my introduction last night by Mr. C.'s return from Bath House. That eternal Bath House. I wonder how many thousand miles Mr. C. has walked between

there and here, putting it altogether; setting up always another milestone and another betwixt himself and me. Oh, good gracious! when I first noticed that heavy yellow house, without knowing, or caring to know, who it belonged to, how far I was from dreaming that through years and years I should carry every stone's weight of it on my heart. About feelings already! Well, I will not proceed, though the thoughts I had in my bed about all that were tragical enough to fill a page of thrilling interest.

"*November* 5.—Alone this evening. Lady A. in town again and Mr. C., of course, at Bath House.

'When I think of what I is
And what I used to was,
I gin to think I've sold myself
For very little cas.'

"It is not always, however, that unjust treatment, harshness, and disdain in her husband drives a woman *jusqu'au desordre*, but it drives her to something, and something not to his advantage, any more than to hers. To-day has been like other days outwardly. I have done this and that, and people have come and gone, but all as in a bad dream.

"*May* 29, 1856.—Mr. B. says nine-tenths of the misery of human life proceeds, according to his

observation, from the institution of marriage. He should say from the demoralization, the desecration of the institution of marriage, and then I should cordially agree with him." Petty lying and deception to begin with, for instance.

Well, there are desecrations and desecrations, but Jane and Thomas Carlyle are to be congratulated that they did not in either case, as far as known, fall into the common filth of any physical debasement. It is all tragic enough without that. One noticeable feature of these letters is that the earlier ones mostly begin "Dearest," or "Oh, my dear," but along in the 1850's they are apt to start something in this fashion: "By this time, dear;" that is, the dear gets in a little awkwardly and the dearest has faded into the sear and yellow leaf. There is one beautiful exception to this,—one sunburst of soul for a moment,—when once more Mrs. Carlyle was under the spell of her husband's genius; she is writing of Carlyle's "Frederick the Great."

"CRAIGENVILLE, EDINBURGH,
"Monday, August 24, 1857.

"OH, MY DEAR! What a magnificent book this is going to be! The best of all your books. I say so, who never flatter, as you are too well aware, and who am 'the only person I know that is always in the right!' So far as it is here before me, I find it forcible and vivid, and sparkling as

'The French Revolution,' with the geniality and composure and finish of 'Cromwell,'—a wonderful combination of merits! And how you have contrived to fit together all those different sorts of pictures, belonging to different sorts of times, as compactly and smoothly as a bit of the finest mosaic! Really one may say, of these two first books at least, what Helen said of the letters of her sister who died,—you remember?—'So splendidly put together one would have thought that hand couldn't have written them.'"

No other hand could, and if Jane had never lost sight of this! And if Jane could hear what the world has said of this man, using her letters for authority, while he has chosen silence alone, would she write the Ashburton lightnings again? Perhaps. Even the angels are wilful at times.

SPECIAL VALUE OF THE LAST VOLUMES.

The special value of the last two volumes is not in the further glimpses they give of the painful feuds between Carlyle and his wife, or of Thomas's intimacy with Lady Ashburton, or of the bitter self-rebuking of his later years. This all must and will be set in new light at the right time. The real merit of the books is in the revelation they give of the methods of struggle and work out of which "The French Revolution," "Lectures on Heroes," "Cromwell," "Chartism," "Past and

Present," "The Life of Sterling," and that of "Frederick the Great" really came, and equally for the medallion flashes of noted men and women struck off in moments of white heat by Carlyle himself.

After "Sartor" had gone to sleep in *Fraser's Magazine* and had reawakened in America, and Carlyle had got well settled in Cheyne Row, Chelsea, the actual battle of existence really began. Yet it is worth mentioning here for the encouragement of poorer and more tried men that what with the frugal habits of Carlyle and his wife, plus her fixed though limited income, which was always theirs, not hers, and the absence of children, the Carlyles were really never in sight of the starvation straits that some of his letters picture as a thing to be feared, and in the nature of things they never could be.

He was thirty-nine years of age when they settled in London, had two hundred pounds in clean money saved and the "French Revolution" brewing in his brain. "Spirits of the age" began to seek notes for a biography of the new man. Darwin said to Jane one day in his quizzing, serious manner, "Who will write Carlyle's life?" To all of which Thomas, with indignation, answered, "The world has no business with my life. The world will never know my life. The main facts of it are known and likely to be known to myself

alone of created men." Still, the world is getting it as by streaks of lightning, and the not wholly blind will read the strangest and grandest things, say between the flashes and the lines. In these last books Mr. Froude hastens to say that "Carlyle will tower far above all his contemporaries." And only the blind can think that a man of that sort could inhale or exhale merely rose-water and crystals of snow. His irritability and his melancholy, Mr. Froude says, were the effects, first, of temperament and a sensitive organization,—meaning the same thing; second, of absorption in his work. What the future will add to this heaven as yet only knows. The editor admits that perhaps the majority of us sin deeper every day in the very points in which Carlyle sinned and without his excuses, who yet do not know that they—we—have anything to repent of.

NEW WORK AND ITS METHODS.

Carlyle's first winter in London was passing away and his prospects were a blank. John Mill was then one of his closest friends. Mill himself had thought of writing on the French Revolution, and when the manuscript of Carlyle's first volume was ready it was submitted to Mill for reading and any notes to be made. Mill read it and marvelled, gave it to his Mrs. Taylor to read; somebody sinned, or blundered, or both, and a maid gave the

priceless manuscripts to the fire. The story of Mill's visit to Carlyle to break this news, of the utter dejection of the humanitarian and of Carlyle himself, has often been told. Mill wanted to pay two hundred pounds in money. Carlyle accepted one hundred pounds, as in some sense a duty, and fought all the devils of doubt and delay and of a vanished inspiration, till the work was done over again as it stands in the world's mind to-day.

What is brought out in this instance, as in all the other periods of work and rest or attempts at rest throughout Carlyle's life, is that during the gathering together of the materials for his books, the periods of choice of subjects, he was in one eternal seething misery until each separate task was done. And that then sometimes for months, sometimes for years together, he was broken as if in pieces, lay fallow, strolled inconsolate, reading rubbish and casting it away, till the new storm began to gather, and then it was as thunder and lightning till the clouds were emptied again. There was no treadmill, daily, rising and setting sun or moon kind of work in a genius of his kind. Much less could he accept a position on the London *Times* and do the work to be chosen for him by others, as was the custom then more even than now.

THE STERLING EPISODE.

In one of these enforced periods of idleness the acquaintance between John Sterling and Carlyle —which had been at first amusing to the Scotchman on account of the lighter, sunny beauty of admiration that shone from Sterling's eyes—grew immensely attractive to Carlyle. Sterling had discovered great qualities in "Sartor Resartus" when as yet others were blind to them; and their friendship, taken all in all, is perhaps the choicest thing in modern literary life. The last sentence in the "French Revolution" was written on the 12th of January, 1837, on a damp evening, "just as light was fading." Carlyle gave the manuscript to his wife to read and went out to walk. Not to Mill this time or to the fire. On January 17th he wrote to Sterling, both points being luminous of the newer and finer relationships, "Five days ago I finished French Revolution about ten o'clock at night—late twilight, or later than just as the light was failing—and was ready both to weep and pray, but did not do either, at least not visibly or audibly. The bookseller has it. . . . Finally, it has gone as near to chocking the life out of me as any task I should like to undertake for some years to come."

So the years went on, new friendships forming. "Past and Present" got out of chaos about as the

"French Revolution" had come; the intimacy with John Mill growing thinner every year and the bonds with Sterling stronger; the intimacy with Lady Ashburton developing, and here in a letter of 1844 is a glimpse of Carlyle at her feet, or say at a distance so far! Carlyle is on a visit at the grange, and writing to his wife of Lady Ashburton, says, "She seems very fond of talking to me; a frank, rattling woman, with whom, perhaps, I shall grow to do very well." Not yet "the most queen-like woman that it has ever been my lot to know," with worlds of misery between the grange and Cheyne Row. Indeed, in 1843, Carlyle could still say to his wife, "My dearest, while I live one soul to trust in shall not be wanting. My poor little Jeannie." But what are adjectives to heat in the blood? to an overcharged, unloved brain?

Several things were closing and arising in those days. Sterling is written to on the deepest and holiest things, such as no other man, not even Froude, to the last day, had been written to or spoken with, and in August, 1844, when it was Sterling's time to go on before, this comes from Ventnor: "My dear Carlyle: for the first time for many months it seems possible to send you a few words, merely, however, for remembrance and farewell. On higher matters there is nothing to say. I tread the common road into the great darkness without any thought of fear and with

very much of hope. Certainty, indeed, I have none. With regard to you and me, I cannot begin to write, having nothing for it but to keep shut the lid of those secrets with all the iron weights that are in my power. Towards me it is still more true than towards England, that no man has been and done like you. Heaven bless you. If I can lend a hand when there,"—some certainty of getting there, apparently,—"that will not be wanting. It is all very strange, but not a hundredth part so sad as it seems to the standers-by. Your wife knows my mind towards her and will believe it without asseveration." Readers of Carlyle's Life of Sterling will remember this and have no further need to look for the inspiration that floods it with a tenderness so human that it is almost divine.

MEDALLIONS OF CHARACTER.

Life lingers not over its dead, perhaps because of the consciousness that "all live in Him." And Carlyle's work on the Life of Cromwell was soon to ring out the grief that sapped his mind because Sterling was dead. Work and despair not was always in his mind, and the period from 1845 to 1850, during which "Cromwell" and "Sterling" were both done, was the intensest and most immortal of his life. Cromwell was a new authentic creation, and so genuine that converts wanted to erect a new monument to the Protector, and the

work seemed to put Carlyle for once and all on the Radical Liberal side.

When the Life of Sterling came, it was admittedly the most devout and beautiful thing ever written, but it set Frederick Maurice, then a leader in the orthodox Liberal ranks and a brother-in-law of Sterling's, together with the entire Coleridgian and humanitarian schools and men, at a distance, saying, "Does not believe in us either, then?" Under Carlyle's treatment Cromwell ceased to be a canting hypocrite, seeking only his own ends, and became the modern hero of justice, another Moses, anxious to rule by the ten commandments, if not by the sermon on the mount. And under his touch Sterling was no longer the lost doubter, as Julius Hare had painted him, but the conqueror of new, sincere heights in a truly religious life.

Frederick Maurice appeared to him as a somewhat diluted and cloudy incarnation of the thirty-nine articles of the Anglican Church; and his query, "Did God shape His universe really by you?" expresses his contempt for Maurice's mental attitude. For the man himself Carlyle grew to have some liking. In Coleridge and his "Table Talk" Carlyle saw only a great possibility that had not realized itself; never did he see such apparatus got ready for thinking and yet so little thought,—a lax, languid, impotent character, given to opium

and talk and snuff. Dickens carried a copy of the "French Revolution" wherever he went, revealing a depth there, too, not always credited to him. Southey read it six times over,—dear, mild soul,—glad of a kindling of real fire. Jeffrey at last admitted that Carlyle had done better than taking up with his starched patronage. Even in Jeffrey there were responses to verity, if it struck him hard enough.

Miss Martineau was really of pleasant countenance, though deaf as a post and had to be spoken to through an ear-trumpet; not welcome if she came too often, though he respected her, and to him she had been a true friend. Finally he could not help saying, "I wish the good Harriet would be happy by herself," as her cackle to him was absurd.

Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, wrote that since he had read the "French Revolution" he had longed to become acquainted with its author, seeing, perhaps, it was that and not Dr. Arnold that would change the face of education and other things in England and elsewhere. Of Macaulay and his theory of liberal government Carlyle said, he considers reform to mean a judicious combining of those that have any money to keep down those that have none; that hunger among the masses is irremediable; that the pigs should simply be taught to die without squealing. "At bottom this Macaulay is

but a poor creature, with his dictionary literature and erudition and his saloon arrogance."

And here is a little photograph of Thomas by Jane, which Carlyle told as a good joke on himself: "When the wife has influenza, it is a slight cold; when the man has it, it is etc., etc." So it was diamond cut diamond once in a while. Of George Sand and her works and worshippers and the fraternity that sailed in that boat, he said, "It is a new Phallas worship, with Sue, Balzac, and company for prophets and Madame Sand for a virgin." A picture taken by firelight, perhaps, rather than by the sun. Though he often thought Emerson somewhat moonlightish and dainty, still, such as he was, a kind of incarnate new era for this side the sea. John Forster, author of "Life of Dickens" and "Life of Swift," was "Fuz," and he and Dickens and his friends were "a squad of that sort," acting in private theatricals. "The excellent Fuz!"

And poor Joseph Mazzini, to whom Mrs. Carlyle unburdened her heart after one of the worst quarrels she and Thomas ever knew, tells his own sad story. To keep Jane in the way of conjugal discipline and prevent her from going into the madness of open rupture with Carlyle, Joseph wrote in 1846, "I now most coolly and deliberately do declare to you, that partly through what is known to you, partly through things that will never be

known, I am carrying a burden even heavier than you, and have undergone even bitterer deceptions than you have. . . . Awake, arise, dear friend!" Deceptions! by whom? Awake, arise, more dear friends! Is it any wonder Mazzini wanted to reform Italy or himself?

These be thy gods, O Israel! The then Bishop of Oxford thought "Carlyle a most eminently religious man." And after his Latter-day Pamphlets the Liberals thought he had gone to whiskey and the devil and was in danger of losing all his friends. Sir Robert Peel seemed to him solid and humane and hopeful. Except him in public life there was nobody Carlyle had the smallest hope in, and Sir Robert fell from his horse and died in the summer of 1850.

THE LAST GENERATION.

After 1851 Carlyle gave the working energies of his life to "Frederick the Great," and in its preparation Mr. Neuberg, a German enthusiast, whose correspondence and work with Carlyle have since filled a charming place in English periodical literature, became a true friend and helper. It is often painfully evident through these volumes, especially along in 1855, that in his admiration for Lady Ashburton Carlyle not only allowed his wife to be placed in disagreeable and humiliating relationships with that rattling lady, but assisted

in fixing her there. On a trip to Scotland, a palatial carriage having been engaged, Lady Ashburton occupied the saloon alone, while Mrs. Carlyle, though in bad health, was placed in the compartment with her husband, the family doctor, and Lady A.'s maid. For allowing which all right-minded men will forever be inclined to box his whirled head. But even prophets are taken off their feet at times.

At heart and throughout from that wretched Irving episode, when Jane had palpably deceived him, till her death Carlyle loved his wife more tenderly than she loved him. He confided less of his heartaches in this line to his friends than she did to hers. Had she exerted herself to capture his heart and woo his tired, raging life, to rest with half the zeal that she managed her housekeeping and criticised his faults, he would have adored her living as he did when she was dead. And his self-accusation in this line must be taken as the second childhood of a heart that had missed the eternal privilege of loving and trusting all in one.

Throughout the second of his last two volumes Mr. Froude shows every now and then that up to the time of her death Carlyle trusted his mother and loved the stern old lady as he could not love and trust his wife. His longing dependence on that wife is at times pitiful, and as one reads her sharp philippics in the place of such a returning

tenderness as might have been or would have been for a semi-lunatic like Irving, one is inclined to wish she had died a half a century earlier, while Carlyle was still in his prime. But when nature has a mind to make a man, the shrews to vex him and the thorns in his side are not usually lacking as a part of the business.

Mr. Froude asserts and reasserts that Carlyle's life is stainless, will bear the fiercest light, and before little men condemn they should try to live such a life of abnegation of their bodies, of denial of every sham and lie, not to speak of accomplishing such work as never man did before him. Mr. Froude admits that the change in England from bondage of thought and the mere cant of thought to some possibility of freest thought on all subjects whatsoever is largely due to Carlyle's work and life. But this is a theme that must in the future demand books to explain it.

In 1865 the last proofs of Frederick were being read, and the last period of sixteen years Mr. Froude has crowded into a hundred and fifty pages, though much of it is more minutely covered in the letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle. There was nothing left but to part with Lady Ashburton, to bury his "Dearest Jeannie," and mourn as never man mourned before till his own end came in 1881; a long and restless life of eighty-five years. Beaconsfield offered him a peerage, Dean Stanley

offered him Westminster Abbey, but he preferred dreary Ecclefechan, the place of his birth, for his grave, and of course "in future centuries," etc., our children's children will make pilgrimages to that grave.

"Here eyes do regard you,
In Eternity's stillness;
Here is all fulness,
Ye brave, to reward you;
Work, and despair not."

VI.

GEORGE ELIOT.*

" The winds, as at their hour of birth,
Leaning upon the wingéd sea,
Breathe low around the rolling earth
With mellow preludes, ' We are free.' "

MARY ANN EVANS, known to the world as George Eliot, for the best, most brilliant and successful twenty-five years of her life the unlawful, self-married wife of George Henry Lewes, and for the last few faded months of her life the lawful wife of J. W. Cross, was born at Arbury Farm, in Warwickshire, England, at five o'clock in the morning, November 22, 1819. Her name and the circumstances and work of her life are already of world-wide fame, which is bound to increase and deepen as long as English books are read. Lives and lives of her will be written. Several fair attempts at a life of her have already been made, and among them the three volumes by Mr. J. W. Cross will always be viewed as a treasure-house of authentic information.

A daintier or a more respectful and distantly

* Written in review of J. W. Cross's Life of George Eliot, 1885.

but reverently affectionate compilation of clippings from the letters and journals of this noted Englishwoman could not well have been gotten together. But though containing abundant wealth of material, these books are in no true and complete sense a biography or an autobiography of George Eliot. Spirit alone can reveal spirit, genius alone can interpret and explain genius, and though Mr. Cross's part of the work is full of tender regard for the great woman whose life was given to him to protect towards its dreary close, and though he clearly manifests an ability to set his own thoughts down in plain and lucid English, it is all more like the daily entries in a ledger than a living, breathing reproduction of what was one of the most notable and important lives of modern times.

Like all refined and sensitive persons, men and women, George Eliot shrank from any unravelling of her private life to public gaze, and, naturally enough, the desire to be treated without curiosity in her lifetime and to be handled with reverent tenderness after her death was intensified in her case because of the daring social position she deliberately chose to fill. But nobody knew better than she that during her life that social anomaly was the theme of thousands of conversations among those that admired and loved her best as well as among those who never had learned to admire or love her, and that as long as her literary

reputation endured that social anomaly would rise up for questioning.

If it is the intellectual calibre of George Eliot alone the world wants to decipher, that can be accomplished by an earnest study of her books. But if, as Mr. Cross suggests, it is the other, the affectionate, sympathetic heart side of her existence, that the biography is meant to reveal, then a freer and much more capable handling of the rich material left in the world by her is needed. As a matter of fact, George Eliot's "relationship" with George Lewes not only covers the greatest and best part of her life, but his influence had a good deal to do with the shape that life finally took even in its literary career, and from little glintings dropped here and there in these volumes it is evident that whatever of singleness and fineness and depth and spontaneity and permanency of disappointed affection George Eliot was capable of in her maturity,—and her heart, like her mind, was one of the richest of the ages,—she gave unstintedly to George Lewes; gave it to him from first to last spite of all that forsook her for so doing and spite of all the barriers that England and the best people of the world threw in her way. This is the real mystery and glory of her hungry but splendid life. That it failed her is certain. But this "relationship" as it moulded and shaped her conduct in all things and her work besides

must be eventually treated with the candor, reverence, and justice that it deserves.

What would not the world give now for such letters and journals from William Shakespeare as George Eliot left behind her, and what would it think of the biographer that dared to say out of hundreds of letters he had not given a single letter in full? It was George Eliot, not some refined and possible apology for George Eliot, that the world desired. It is of infinite importance now that we know that Socrates stayed by his Xantippe to the end; that Paul had a thorn in the flesh and some body of death about him that "the Lord" did not think best to remove. It is something to know that Thomas Carlyle did not get a divorce from his Jane; that Rochester in "Jane Eyre" endured the insane married woman till death brought relief, and that John Ruskin was divorced.

These are not even hints at judgment or condemnation; not at all. It is only an assertion that the relation of any human being to the moral law, as applied to conjugal and social life, represents and reveals the highest and most important realm of that human life, and the greater the character the more infinitely important is this relationship and the notions the great man or the great woman has of the same. George Eliot was at heart too pure and noble as well as great to need any veil hung over her career. This is not meant in any

sense to justify anything in that career that the highest laws of life will not justify. It is only to say that what George Eliot thought of it all in her own deep heart and mind, and which she has probably revealed in some of her letters, is the very divine secret of human existence that the struggling human heart everywhere longs to know. And in George Eliot's case supremely it is this aspect of her life as understood and believed in or regretted by herself that everybody wants to understand. A hundred years hence her fidelity to George Lewes and her convictions about that will outweigh a thousand Daniel Derondas.

George Eliot was a martyr to a mistaken idea of life. It is a new phase of martyrdom, and all the more important because she bore it like a saint.

GEORGE ELIOT'S YOUTH.

Mr. Cross "pauses for a moment to pay due homage to the precision" of the record of Mary Ann Evans's birth made by her father, "because it was in all probability to this most noteworthy quality of her father's nature that the future author was indebted for one of the principal elements of her own after-success,—the enormous faculty for taking pains." No doubt there was this faculty in George Eliot's life and work,—that it supplemented and made her genius effective; that the power of exact work in her is what sepa-

rates her and her work by ages and diameters from the mere egotistic form of such Bohemian work of genius as usually gets into a great part of women's and men's literary productions. But, alas! George Eliot's success and her ability of taking pains—her ability at all, for that matter—is the unexplained factor of her existence which the biographer is called on to explain.

If it had been the father in her or the mother alone, the rest of the young Evanses, as the rest of the young Shakespeares and Carlyles, would have written "Mills on the Floss," "Hamlets," and "French Revolutions." No, no; it was a certain fortuitous, say divine concurrence of atoms and forces around that birth at Arbury Farm at five o'clock of the morning, November 22, 1819, and the concurrence of circumstances that wrought in Mary Ann Evans's life to make her what she was and keep her eyes to heaven's keenest light that made her successful and immortal, too. The father is known, and the mother and all their surroundings, and all George Eliot's own doings and sayings and friendships and relationships, from the day of her birth to the day of her death, and it is out of all this that some gifted hand, guided by clearest vision and prompted by the largest charity, must sooner or later weave a story commensurate with the life and work of the greatest woman ever born on English soil.

What the accuracy of the record of birth does prove is what is known to all persons at all familiar with the ways of middle-class country people in England, namely, that the parents are invariably particular in recording the day and hour of birth of their children; that it is always kept in some Bible or diary and referred to now and then with tenderest affection. And this simple record, together with what follows, is a very pretty revelation of the chaste and refined life-blood out of which George Eliot came. The baby was born on St. Cecilia's Day, and Mr. Evans, being a good churchman, took her on the 29th of November to be baptized in the church at Chilvers Coton,—the parish in which Arbury Farm lies,—a church destined to impress itself strongly on the child's imagination and to be known by many people in many lands afterwards as Shepperton Church.

OTHER GLIMPSES OF FATHER AND MOTHER.

In "Theophrastus Such" there are bits of paper looking backward which are true autobiography. This, for instance: "In my earliest remembrance of my father his hair was already gray, for I was his youngest child, and it seemed to me that advanced age was appropriate to a father, as, indeed, in all respects I considered him a parent so much to my honor that the mention of my relationship to him was likely to secure me regard among

those to whom I was otherwise a stranger. . . . Nor can I be sorry, though myself given to meditative if not active innovation, that my father was a Tory who had not exactly a dislike to innovators and dissenters, but a slight opinion of them as persons of ill-founded self-confidence. . . . And I often smile at my consciousness that certain Conservative prepossessions have mingled themselves for me with the influences of our Midland scenery, from the tops of the elms down to the buttercups and the little wayside vetches. Naturally enough. That part of my father's prime to which he oftenest referred had fallen on the days when the great wave of political enthusiasm and belief in a speedy regeneration of all things had ebbed, and the supposed millennial initiative of France was turning into a Napoleonic empire."

Mr. Evans was also, like Adam Bede, noteworthy for his extraordinary physical strength and determination of character. His second wife, George Eliot's mother, was a woman with an unusual amount of natural force; a shrewd, practical person, with a considerable dash of the Mrs. Poyser vein in her. Hers was an affectionate, warm-hearted nature, and her children, on whom she cast "the benediction of her gaze," were thoroughly attached to her. She came of a race of yeomen, and her social position was, therefore, rather better than her husband's at the time of

their marriage. Her family are, no doubt, prototypes of the Dodsons in the "Mill on the Floss." George Eliot was then a reincarnation of the maturity and conservatism of her father and the dash or abandon of his second wife. This alone opening vistas of psychological philosophy to those that can see.

MARY ANN AS A SCHOOL-GIRL.

When her brother was eight years old he was sent to school at Coventry, and, her mother continuing in very delicate health, little Mary Ann, now five years of age, went to join her sister at Miss Lathom's school at Attleboro', where they continued as boarders for three or four years, coming occasionally home to Griff on Saturdays. During one of their walks at Witley in 1880 George Eliot told Mr. Cross that what chiefly remained in her recollection about this very early school life was the difficulty of getting near enough the fire in winter to become thoroughly warmed, owing to the circle of girls forming round too narrow a fireplace. This suffering from cold was the beginning of a low general state of health; also at this time she began to be subject to fears at night,—"the susceptibility to terror,"—which she has described as haunting Gwendolen Harleth in her childhood.

The other girls in the school, who were all very

much older, made a great pet of the child and used to call her "little mamma," and she was not unhappy except at nights; but she used to say that this liability to have "all her soul become a quivering fear," which remained with her afterwards, had been one of the supremely important influences dominating at times her future life. Another epoch presently succeeded, on her removal to Miss Franklin's school at Coventry, in her thirteenth year. She was probably then very much what she has described her own Maggie at the age of thirteen: "A creature full of eager, passionate longings for all that was beautiful and glad; thirsty for all knowledge; with an ear straining after dreamy music that died away and would not come near to her; with a blind, unconscious yearning for something that would link together the wonderful impressions of this mysterious life and give her soul a sense of home in it. No wonder when there is this contrast between the outward and the inward that painful collisions come of it."

After, as well as during, her school days George Eliot was altogether an unusual, intense, introspective individual, with whom serious reading and thinking were not the mere accidents of a mechanical school training, but the inevitable, spontaneous, and necessary outcome of inward forces and fires that only so could be stilled. At school she had studied German and French and

music, had pored over the Life of Wilberforce, had read Pascal and Hannah More's Letters and the most earnest, accepted literature of the period. She had also prayed and fully expected the Lord to give her such insight into life as would be a veritable revelation, and, what was more, to make her a Christian, not as a fringe to a garment or as Sunday to the week, but for her daily bread. It was no common life at all.

Naturally in this frame of mind as her girlhood ripened into young womanhood, and with one or two heart-tragedies behind her, she was lonely enough, sad enough, too often; ever seeking some "sympathetic soul" into whose heart she could, in some measure, pour her own fulness of hope and despair. Finally she found some excuse for such soul in a Miss Lewis, the correspondence with whom takes up a good deal of space in the first volume of Mr. Cross's work.

Speaking of this period of her life afterward, George Eliot said, smiling, "The only thing I should care much to dwell on would be the absolute despair I suffered from of ever being able to achieve anything." Of course there were bitter enough causes for that despair, and the world would like to know them. "No one could ever have felt greater despair, and a knowledge of this might be a help to some other struggler." She was satisfied that it was the duty of every human

being to seek happiness, to live for the greatest good of the greatest number, and all the high-flown theories of the new era of reaction against the hard absolutism of Puritanism were fresh in her early mind.

The preachers being dull she gradually grew weary of the church. It did not feed her heart or mind, it only stirred the depths that could not well be set at rest. In this frame of mind Strauss's "Life of Jesus" fell in her way, and she took to translating it. In April, 1844, at the age of twenty-five, Miss Evans was working away at Strauss at the rate of six pages a day. Those who have read Strauss's "Life of Jesus" may have some slight conception of the effect the translation of that work into clear, strong English speech must have had on this lonely, intense twenty-five-year-old young woman. No wonder that on the 14th of February, 1846, Mrs. Bray wrote to Miss Sara Hennell that Miss Evans "says she is Strauss-sick, —it makes her ill dissecting the beautiful story of the Crucifixion, and only the sight of the Christ-image and picture make her endure it. Moreover, as her work advances nearer its public appearance, she grows dreadfully nervous. Poor thing, I do pity her sometimes, with her pale, sickly face, and dreadful headaches and anxiety, too, about her father. This illness of his has tried her so much, for all the time she had for rest and fresh air she

had to read to him. Nevertheless, she looks very happy and satisfied sometimes in her work." A hidden Christ-image having something to do with that, no doubt.

Finally Strauss was off her heart and hands, and we hear of her as reading George Sand's "Lettres d'un Voyageur" with great delight. Strauss, the Christ-image, and George Sand,—a singular combination. But Mary Ann Evans had to have intellectual food first of all, and the fates saw to that. She had a passion for Thomas à Kempis, delighted in Wordsworth, of course, and thought Mr. Buckle a conceited, ignorant man. It was the sublimest creative period of modern English literature. Carlyle's "Sartor," Ruskin's "Modern Painters," and Tennyson's "In Memoriam," all came out of the period from 1835 to 1850. Darwin's "Origin of Species" was brewing. But of all these and how they affected the young womanhood of Mary Ann Evans little or nothing is said. In fact, they did not take hold of her as did the works of Spinoza and Voltaire. As in all great lives, the groundwork of her existence, her readings, her plans, was serious. The death of her father in the early part of 1849, when Mary Ann Evans was in her twenty-eighth year, deepened and intensified the seriousness of this thoughtful, isolated life. After the death of her father she accompanied some friends on a trip to the continent, spent some time in

France and Northern Italy, settled for a good part of a year in Geneva, and found pleasant friendships there that stood by her all her life.

LIFE AND WORK IN LONDON.

On returning from her continental tour Miss Evans wrote for the *Westminster Review* a criticism of Mackay's "Progress of the Intellect." Soon after she was invited to become assistant editor on the *Westminster*, moved up to London as a place of permanent residence, and went to live as a boarder in the house of Mr. Chapman, the editor of the *Review*. It is an utterly new phase of existence, complicated from the start, and can only be understood as Mary Ann Evans's life is viewed as the providential centre in which and out of which numerous literary and social problems were finally to solve themselves. At Mr. Chapman's house Miss Evans naturally met all the aggressive, scientific, reform writers of the period, and being really the strongest and clearest soul among them, she soon became the magnet of intellectual attraction.

At Mr. Chapman's she met Herbert Spencer. Symposiums were the order of the hour. The Old World was to be righted, scientifically, socially, religiously. And this coterie, taken together with Strauss and George Sand, account for all that followed. Here are glimpses of that early London life: "Mr. Mackay"—Progress of Intellect Mac-

kay—"has been very kind in coming and walking out with me, and that is the only variety I have had." A very mild kind of variety. "Carlyle called the other day, strongly recommending Browning as a writer for the *Review*, and saying 'We shall see,' about himself." A very different kind of variety. "On Sunday afternoon came Mr. Spencer to ask Mr. Chapman and me to go to the theatre." Still another variety, with much in it not yet revealed. "So I ended the day in a godless manner, seeing 'The Merry Wives of Windsor.'" And here is the first real sight of George Lewes, who was to play such a fated part in her future life: "I was introduced to Lewes the other day in Jeff's shop,—a sort of miniature Mirabeau in appearance." And Mr. Cross explains that "this was a merely formal and casual introduction. That George Eliot was ever brought into close relations with Mr. Lewes was due to Mr. Herbert Spencer having taken him to call on her in the Strand later in this year." And between that earlier and later meeting there are soul-forming hidden secrets that the world would very much like to understand.

Mr. Herbert Spencer, it is clear, was at that time on decidedly intimate terms with the new authoress. Here is proof. She says, "I went to the opera on Saturday—'I Martiri,' at Covent Garden—with my 'excellent friend, Herbert Spen-

cer,' as Lewes calls him. We have agreed that we are not in love with each other, and that there is no reason why we should not have as much of each other's society as we like. He is a good, delightful creature, and I always feel better for being with him." This is utterly new language and a new life for the long isolated and lonely soul. Mr. Cross says, "On the 4th of May, 1852, a meeting, consisting chiefly of authors, was held at the house in the Strand, for the purpose of hastening the removal of the trade restrictions on the commerce of literature, and it is thus described in the following letter: 'The meeting last night went off triumphantly, and I saluted Mr. Chapman with "See, the Conquering Hero Comes," on the piano at twelve o'clock; for not until then was the last magnate, except Herbert Spencer, out of the house.'" It was science on the move, and in new spheres.

Mr. George Lewes, who was already known for his "Biographical History of Philosophy," two novels, and various contributions to periodical literature, had already become simply "Lewes" in Miss Evans's letters, and how ponderous it all was at first is seen in the following: "Lewes called on me the other day and told me of a conversation with Professor Owen, in which the latter declared his conviction that the cerebrum was not the organ of the mind, but the cerebellum rather." Hearts

not yet located, or all revelations in that line so far suppressed. Florence Nightingale, Harriet Martineau, and dozens of other persons flit across the scenes here, but they do not concern the story. There is a lighter touch with George: "Lewes was describing Currer Bell to me yesterday as a little, plain, provincial, sickly-looking old maid. Yet what passion, what fire in her! Quite as much as in George Sand, only the clothing is less voluptuous." Alas! and fortunately it is a different heart and soul, not of clothing merely. In April, 1853, Miss Evans writes,—

"People are very good to me. Mr. Lewes especially is kind and attentive, and has quite won my regard, after having had quite a good deal of my vituperation. Like a few other people in the world, he is much better than he seems. A man of heart and conscience, wearing a mask of flippancy." These are only the pleasure episodes of that period. Steadily, every day some good work was done for the *Westminster*, and steadily the fates were closing round her social destiny. Good-hearted George Lewes might have been, and he was smart in streaks, but he was weak as water from the cradle to the grave.

SELF-MARRIED TO GEORGE LEWES.

As Mr. Cross truly says, "We have now been led up to the most important event in George

Eliot's life,—her union with Mr. George Henry Lewes." The strongest woman in England was about to commit herself for life to an open, unlawful, self-married relationship with what, as time goes by, turns out to have been only a third- or fourth-rate literary man. In some explanation or expiation, it is said that "not only was Mr. Lewes's previous family life irretrievably spoiled, but his home had been wholly broken up for nearly two years." There is infinite interest in that, but no space here for it. George Lewes, his mere dress-and-be-admired-wife and his children, and the total history of a world full of such people are of small moment except as related to the woman who, in this instance, is the centre of all eyes. Mr. Cross barely mentions the actual fact of union in his summary of chapter vi. volume i.

It was in July, 1854, they started on their questionable honeymoon, on board the Ravensbourne, bound for Antwerp; went to Weimar and saw Strauss. They did lots of work that fall and winter. Both heads had ceased to ache, and worked like lightning or the sun in spring. It was all creative of its kind. Lewes was completing his "Life of Goethe," and Mary Ann Evans, who had now taken George Lewes's Christian name, and had added Eliot because it was a "good, mouth-filling word" to go with George, was translating Spinoza's ethics and reading Goethe's "Faust,"

"Egmont," and the rest: reading Heine's poems, Shakespeare's "Romeo," and a whole raft of new matter for new work beyond. She was thirty-three years old. It was nature's own first days.

"Love took up the harp of life and smote on all its chords with might."

On her part it was clear, open freedom, with no lie or lust to hide or deny.

Here is what George Eliot has to say about it in a letter to Mrs. Bray:

"If there is any one action or relation of my life which is and always has been profoundly serious it is my relation to Mr. Lewes. No one can be better aware than yourself that it is possible for two people to hold different opinions on momentous subjects with equal sincerity and an equally earnest conviction that their respective opinions are alone the truly moral ones. If we differ on the subject of the marriage laws, I at least can believe of you that you cleave to what you believe to be good; and I don't know of anything in the nature of your views that should prevent you from believing the same of me. Light and easily-broken ties are what I neither desire theoretically nor could live for practically. Women who are satisfied with such ties do *not* act as I have done. That any unworldly, unsuperstitious person who is sufficiently acquainted with the realities of

life can pronounce my relation to Mr. Lewes immoral, I can only understand by remembering how subtile and complex are the influences that mould opinion. But I do remember this, and I indulge in no arrogant or uncharitable thoughts about those who condemn us, even though we might have expected a somewhat different verdict. From the majority of persons, of course, we never looked for anything but condemnation. We are leading no life of self-indulgence, except, indeed, that, being happy in each other, we find everything easy. We are working hard to provide for others better than we provide for ourselves, and to fulfil every responsibility that lies upon us. Levity and pride would not be a sufficient basis for that. Pardon me if, in vindicating myself from some unjust conclusions, I seem too cold and self-asserting. I should not care to vindicate myself if I did not love you and desire to relieve you of the pain which you say these conclusions have given you. I should like never to write about myself again; it is not healthy to dwell on one's own feelings and conduct, but only to try and live more faithfully and lovingly every fresh day. I think not one of the endless words and deeds of kindness and forbearance you have ever shown me has vanished from my memory. I recall them often, and feel, as about everything else in the past, how deficient I have been in almost every relation of my

life. But that deficiency is irrevocable, and I can find no strength or comfort except in 'pressing forward towards the things that are before.'"

It is all very deep and true and tender, but read in the white light of kindest charity her best friends now see that it was and is only a case of special pleading that justifies even to herself only the motives, not the conduct of her life. And Mr. Cross is all too conscious of the weakness of her convictions about it to attempt any further explanation or palliation.

BACK TO ENGLAND AND AT WORK.

In 1855, Mr. and Mrs. George Eliot-Lewes, for that is the order of nature, returned to England and took up the course of life and work that have made her immortal. Up to this time her work had been mainly in the way of translations, reviews, and special articles for the magazines and papers. It is gratuitous to assume that had George Eliot continued in this line of work she would not have become as great and famous as she has become as a writer of fiction. Carlyle held to history and biography, and is somewhat widely known. George Lewes, by his kindly and lighter influence, finally determined the character of George Eliot's work and reputation. "As the husband is the wife is." But George Lewes did not give George Eliot her immortal brain or soul. And it is folly

to presume that she owes to him her reputation or prosperity. She had conquered a position before he won her sympathy and finally moulded her life. Her committal to Lewes lifted her for the time being out of the sphere of truth and prophecy and made fiction necessary.

In actual life and history there are no ifs or might-have-beens. The fact that George Eliot did accept a man of Lewes's calibre and did allow him to inspire and so direct her grade or kind of literary labor is evidence enough that strong as she was she was not strong enough to resist such a temptation (a dash of the Mrs. Poyser in her somewhere), and the fact that she took to novels instead of poetry or history is proof enough that George Lewes and novel-writing were a part of the message her noble but mistaken life was meant to tell.

The final decision may be that novel-writing was not the highest possibility of her life; all of it going to show that supremacy of intellect, purity of motive and heart, singleness of affection and loyalty to love's own vows could not altogether keep this woman's face to the clear light she started with. That is the deeper and as yet untouched side of her life problem. But as heaven is just and the interests of womanhood of infinitely greater importance than the veiling of any one woman's life, the truth on all that must some time be told.

What George Eliot did was to return to London

as the loyal companion of George Lewes, take his advice and leading inspiration as to her future work, and that all led to fiction and unexpected prosperity. The drudgery of reviewing and leader-writing had not brought her affluence. Lewes himself was only equal to earning his living. Every motive drove them to seek prosperity. The sphere of fiction was just opening to the broadest ambitions, and Mr. Lewes urged her to try her hand at it. It was after reading an article on Canning that he told her, in August, 1855, while walking in Richmond Park, that it convinced him of her genius for writing. Up to this time he had not been quite sure of anything but great talent in her productions. She was then thirty-six years old. She began to write fiction in September, 1856, a fact, she says, "which made a new era in my life." Here is its incipiency.

"It had always been a vague dream of mine that some time or other I might write a novel, and my shadowy conception of what the novel was to be varied, of course, from one epoch of my life to another. But I never went further towards the actual writing of the novel than an introductory chapter describing a Staffordshire village and the life of the neighboring farm-houses; and as years passed on I lost any hope that I should ever be able to write a novel, just as I desponded about everything else in my future life. I always thought I was deficient

in dramatic power, both in construction and dialogue, but I felt that I should be at my ease in the descriptive parts of a novel. George used to say, 'It may be a failure, but you have wit, description, and philosophy,—those go a good way towards the production of a novel. It is worth while for you to try the experiment.' . . . One morning as I was thinking what should be the subject of my first story my thoughts merged themselves into a dreamy doze and I imagined myself writing a story, of which the title was 'The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton.' I was soon wide awake again and told G.; but I did not begin my story till September 22. After I had begun it, as we were walking in the park, I mentioned to G. that I had thought of the plan of writing a series of stories containing sketches drawn from my own observation of the clergy, and calling them 'Scenes of Clerical Life,' opening with 'Amos Barton.' He at once accepted the notion as a good one—fresh and striking; and about a week afterwards when I read him the first part of 'Amos' he had no longer any doubt about my ability to carry out the plan. The scene at Cross Farm, he said, satisfied him that I had the very element he had been doubtful about,—it was clear I could write good dialogue. There still remained the question whether I could command any pathos, and that was to be decided by the mode in which I treated Milly's

death. One night G. went to town on purpose to leave me a quiet evening for writing it. I wrote the chapter, from the news brought by the shepherd to Mrs. Hackit to the moment when Amos is dragged from the bedside, and I read it to G. when he came home. We both cried over it, and then he came to me and kissed me, saying, 'I think your pathos is better than your fun.'"

Here is beautiful companionship without law, and with it the withering of two souls. Mary Ann Evans, with her Christ-image and a possible, new, divine womanhood, has faded, we say, evolved into George Eliot, and George Lewes is destroyed. "Choose well. Your choice is brief, and yet endless."

The die was cast, and the strongest woman in England was to write the best novels that possibly could be written by a person of her limited, introspective and intensely serious existence.

THE FINANCIAL SITUATION.

George Eliot at first was often somewhat straitened for money. She lived in apartments in London in a humble way, and when she went to Switzerland in 1849 she tried to sell her books and globes in order to raise the money she needed. After "Adam Bede" had established her fame she passed at once into affluence, but she was then forty years old, and the habits formed in the first

part of her life remained. She was always alive to the importance of money, not for its own sake, but for the feeling of independence which it brought, and the pleasure of knowing that she was earning honest money. She sacrificed three thousand pounds on "Romola" rather than consent to its appearing in shorter portions at a time in the *Cornhill Magazine.*

The following is a table of the money she received for her novels, so far as the figures are given in her life. No account is taken of anything beyond the sum paid for the first sale of MSS. The continuing profit from royalties and cheap editions is not reckoned:

1857. "Scenes of Clerical Life." Fifty-two pounds and ten shillings for "Amos Barton." Price not stated for others; one hundred and twenty pounds for first edition, sixty pounds extra paid for success. One thousand copies sold at first.

1858. "Adam Bede." Eight hundred pounds for four years and four hundred pounds added. Sixteen thousand copies sold the first year.

1860. "The Mill on the Floss." Ten shillings a copy of thirty-one shillings sixpence edition, three hundred pounds for American and one hundred pounds for German editions. Six thousand copies sold of first edition.

1861. "Silas Marner." Five thousand five hundred subscriptions.

1863. "Romola." Seven thousand pounds.

1866. "Felix Holt." Five thousand pounds. Twenty thousand copies sold in two years.

1873. "Middlemarch." Published in parts. More than seven thousand pounds. Two hundred and fifty thousand copies sold in two years.

1876. "Daniel Deronda." One thousand two hundred pounds. Same for American edition. Exceeded sale of "Middlemarch."

Declined to renew copyright for ten years (1872), preferring to have a royalty.

From this it will be seen that she received in cash down for the first sale of her books about forty thousand pounds, or about two thousand pounds a year. For his thirty years' work, with insuperably more genius, character, and culture at the back of it, Ralph Waldo Emerson is said to have received in all about thirty thousand dollars, say two hundred pounds a year. And again "choose well," we say.

Throughout all the twenty-four years of her union with George Lewes this splendid woman, who was by all odds the abler man of the two, was not only true as steel to him, no matter what was said of him, or by whom it was said, or what social ostracism it all cost her. She was also ever ready to assert her recognition of the service he had rendered her as her adviser and as the chosen companion of her life. Writing to Madame Bodi-

chon, who had written to congratulate her about "Adam Bede," George Eliot said,—

"I think your letter to-day gave me more joy —more heart-glow—than all the letters and reviews or other testimonies of success that have come to me since the evenings when I read aloud my manuscript to my dear, dear husband, and he laughed and cried alternately, and then rushed to me to kiss me. He is the prime blessing that has made all the rest possible to me, giving me a response to everything I have written,—a response that I could confide in, as a proof that I had not mistaken my work." Henceforth they had art and praise and money, and really only the "Christ-image" had gone.

In dedicating the manuscript of "Romola" to Mr. Lewes, she inscribed it, "To the husband whose perfect love has been the best source of her insight and strength, this manuscript is given by his devoted wife, the writer." On January 1, 1865, she writes, "I am more grateful to my dear husband for his perfect love, which helps me in all good and checks me in all evil,—more conscious that in him I have the greatest of blessings." And again, three months later, "Dear George is all activity, yet is in very frail health. How I worship his good humor, his good sense, his affectionate care for every one who has claims on him! That worship is my best life." Yes! They read

together, worked together, studied together. He corrected and revised her proofs, encouraged her with his praise, shielded her from the annoyances of criticism, and supplemented her somewhat sedate character by his inexhaustible versatility and good spirits. In 1874 she was still writing that "our unspeakable joy in each other has no other alloy than the sense that it must one day end in parting." No other?

DEATH OF MR. LEWES.

Not for four years was that foreboding realized. But at last and suddenly the stroke came. On November 28, 1878, Mr. Lewes lay dead. For some months George Eliot lived alone. "I am a bruised creature, and shrink even from the tenderest touch. Life seems to get harder instead of easier," she wrote in January, 1879; "but I want to live a little time that I may do certain things for his sake, so I try to keep up my strength, and I work as much as I can to save my mind from imbecility. But what used to be joy is joy no longer, and what is pain is easier because he has not to bear it." On February 6 she had never been outside her gate. "My sense of desolation increases; each day seems a new beginning, a new acquaintance with grief." Yet already she had begun to crave for human sympathy. "I do need your affection," she wrote to Mr. Cross on Febru-

ary 7; "every sign of care for me from the beings I respect and love is a help to me." On April 22 she sent him the hurried note, "I am in dreadful need of your counsel. Pray come to me when you can,—morning, afternoon, or evening."

MARRIAGE WITH MR. CROSS.

George Eliot did not meet Mr. Cross till 1869. After the lonely woman's appeal for sympathy in April, 1879, Mr. Cross writes,—

"From this time forward I saw George Eliot constantly. My mother had died in the beginning of the previous December, a week after Mr. Lewes, and as my life had been very much bound up with her I was trying to find some fresh interest in taking up a new pursuit. Knowing very little Italian, I began Dante's 'Inferno,' with Carlyle's translation. The first time I saw George Eliot afterwards she asked me what I was doing, and when I told her, exclaimed, 'Oh, I must read that with you.' And so it was. In the following twelve months we read through the 'Inferno' and the 'Purgatorio' together, —not in a dilettante way, but with minute and careful examination of the construction of every sentence. The prodigious stimulus of such a teacher made the reading a real labor of love. Her sympathetic delight in stimulating my newly awakened enthusiasm for Dante did something to distract her mind from sorrowful memories. The divine poet

took us into a new world. It was a renovation of life. At the end of May I induced her to play on the piano at Witley for the first time; and she played regularly after that whenever I was there, which was generally once or twice a week, as I was living at Weybridge, within easy distance." "Let the dead bury their dead."

They talked of mutual help and such tender, new companionship as was possible to her now. And of all this she says: "But I really did not finally, absolutely decide—I was in a state of doubt and struggle—until only a fortnight before the event took place, so that at last everything was done in the utmost hurry. . . . I shall be a better, more loving creature than I could have been in solitude. To be constantly, lovingly grateful for the gift of a perfect love is the best illumination of one's mind to all the possible good there may be in store for man on this troublous little planet." "The gift of a perfect love." Which? and from whom? Ye gods! Be patient. In truth, that well-known period of second childhood was upon her. There were still yearnings for a legal position that had never been won, and so George Eliot became Mrs. Cross for a day. Take it up tenderly, touch it with care.

THE END.

On the afternoon of Friday, December 17, 1880, Mr. Cross and George Eliot went to see the

"Agamemnon" performed in Greek by Oxford undergraduates. She took cold. "On the following Sunday there was very slight trouble in the throat, but not sufficient to prevent her from coming down-stairs to breakfast, as usual. . . . Little more remains to be told. On Monday the doctor treated the case as one of laryngeal sore throat, and when Dr. Andrew Clark came for consultation on Wednesday evening the pericardium was found to be seriously affected. While the doctors were at her bedside she had just time to whisper to me, 'Tell them I have great pain in the left side,' before she became unconscious. Her long illness in the autumn had left her no power to rally. She passed away about ten o'clock at night on the 22d of December, 1880."

Her body rests in Highgate Cemetery, in the grave next to Mr. Lewes. In sleet and snow, on a bitter day,—the 29th of December,—very many whom she knew, very many whom she did not know, pressed to her grave-side with tributes of *tears* and *flowers*. And,

> "The streams through many a lilied row
> Down-carolling to the crispéd sea,
> Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
> Atween the blossoms, 'We are free.'"

VII.

GEORGE SAND.*

" Good-night and good-by to the life whose signs denote us
As mourners clothed with regret for the life gone by;
To the waters of gloom, whence winds of the day-spring float us,
Good-night and good-by."

M. RENAN relates that when he was a boy of fifteen his ecclesiastical superiors showed him George Sand emblematically portrayed for the admonition of youth under their care as a woman in black trampling on a cross. And the common sense and common conscience of mankind and of womankind may eventually confess that there is much more truth than fiction in this fearful symbolism of the kindly, simple-minded priesthood. They did not either hate or admire George Sand, but they saw her in the light of a divine truth somewhat beclouded in her life and in these late days. On the whole there is more insight, more revelation of human character, and hence more true biography in this sentence of Renan's than in all the rest of Bertha Thomas's apology. In fact, Miss Thomas has utterly failed to get hold of or reproduce the secret springs, the spirit or

* Written in review of her Biography by Bertha Thomas, 1883.

meaning of the life and career of "George Sand." Thousands of men and tens of thousands of women of all classes and ages are not only ready but anxious to have true and kindly but unvarnished stories told of their stronger sisters, who, in these recent times, have revived striking types of womanhood, but if anything at all is said, it is only just to the living and the dead that the whole truth should be told. By a certain glamour of stage footlights, a certain cleverness and impetuosity of intellect and of tongue,—above all, by a direct appeal to whatever is especially false and sensual and wrecking in the relations of men and women in these days, as in all days, and all this under the sinuous guise of the cant of social freedom for women, George Sand has won the ears and sympathy of thousands of true-hearted women; and her works, especially the example of her life, have wrought unutterable ruin in lives which, without the viciousness of this aid, might to-day have been pure; that is, true; that is, restful, with a certain divinity of influence that no man can possess, and which, in a single-minded, cultivated woman, is the choicest sunlight and beauty of human existence.

The cross is not a mere piece of wood. To trample on what is finest in ourselves is to clothe all life with mourning. Renan's good priests painted better than they knew. It is not neces-

sary to blame or condemn George Sand in saying or in reading this. She was what her ancestors and the age made her. I blame her not.

"O, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round?"

Because one should hold the veil of charity over the face of the dead, that is a different thing from a critical understanding of the life. The last appeal is always to the future and to the living. Our children are our judges. And the time must come when the world will know that it is not cleverness in the art of writing sensational stories, or in fulsome praise of such, or in writing at all,—which of itself is as mechanical an art as printing or sewing,—but in such writing as reveals familiarity with the fountain springs of life and a sympathy of soul with whatever is true and beautiful and peaceful and pure therein.

ANCESTORS.

When one considers the complexities of blood and destiny out of which the future George Sand was, without her consent, brought into being, and pressed into the early battle between natural and unnatural affection, between truth and falsehood, the marvel is that her life was ever anything but a

prostitution and falsehood, and, taking this view of it, there is some excuse for the enthusiasm with which Miss Thomas welcomes any gleams of nobleness and any rays even of motherly tenderness. In truth, George Sand was rich of soul and tender-hearted, but having lost or never known the sense of truth and pureness, she lacked all that keeps any woman from eventual shame.

The ground occupied by Miss Thomas in this work may be gathered from her first sentence. "In naming George Sand," she says, "we name something more exceptional than even a great genius." But charity may well be silent toward a woman who knows so little. "Her rise to eminence in the literature of her century," Miss Thomas declares, "is, if not without a parallel, yet absolutely without a precedent in the annals of women of modern times." But Madame de Staël did stronger and better work than George Sand, and before her. Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Browning, and George Eliot have done deeper, truer, and more abiding work at her side, and have dared to assert a social freedom that in some measure is at once worthy of womanhood and worthy the example of the women of all times.

Of all women of any age George Sand was most wretchedly begotten and wretchedly reared. Legitimacy and illegitimacy may not be generous marks to place on the foreheads of children whose

wishes, if they had any, have never been consulted. But a half-dozen generations of law-abiding parents are something to count on in one's own battle with such Edens as life offers, and a half-dozen generations of parents of "irregular origin," as Miss Thomas calls it, are very apt to tilt the last unfortunate Eve's daughter toward the serpent side of the moral argument. Take her up tenderly, lift her with care, owning her weakness, her evil behavior, but do not say it is something rarer than great genius, this clothing virtue in mourning and trampling on the cross. It is simply the common weakness of fallen souls. George Sand's grandmother and her real guardian, the person who had most to do with her bringing up, was of "irregular origin," a child of hot blood, a proud, conscienceless woman, with but little natural affection or any principle, except regard for that cast of French character which has never minded anything but lust and gain.

Mlle. de Saxe, daughter of old Marshal Saxe, himself of illegitimate birth, was married, when little more than a child, to the Count de Horn, who also was of "irregular origin." The Count cut short his line of succession by a successful duel, and the widow at thirty married one M. Dupin de Francueil, whose origin appears to have been regular, so far as known. Maurice, their only child, the idol of his mother in her way, grew to

young manhood, entered the French army, distinguished himself at the battle of Marengo in 1800, and in 1804 distinguished himself still more by marrying Sophie Victorie Delaborde, a passionate daughter of a poor bird-seller of Paris; married her none too soon.

BIRTH AND EDUCATION.

Perhaps it is as well to let Miss Thomas tell this little episode. Date of marriage not given, but "the devoted pair were married secretly at Paris in 1804, and on the 5th of July in the same year—the last of the French Republic and the first of the Empire—their daughter entered the world," not unlooked for, but under the circumstances not any too welcome. This daughter was called Amantine Lucile Aurore by her parents. But by and by the young lady put on boy's clothes and called herself "George Sand." When the future George was about five years old Maurice Dupin, the father, was thrown from his horse and killed on the spot. At once there arose a debate between the grandmother and the mother for the custody of the child. The grandmother had means—had Nahant for a home. The mother had no means and no home. Aurore was naturally consigned to Nahant and the grandmother, while Madame Dupin, the younger, returned to Paris, perhaps to sell birds. The grandmother was a disciple of Rousseau and of

Voltaire; a hard-featured lady infidel known as Deist, a type which, when once known, never needs to be known again. By this arrangement of guardianship the natures of three persons at least—the mother, the grandmother, and the child, "George"—are violated, and the old work, say the demon's work of irregular origin, is continued day by day. But some Deists like other people are better than their creeds. At the age of thirteen George Sand was sent for education to the Convent des Anglaises, a sort of English school, with some genuine faith in God and truth and man. Miss Thomas says, "To this retreat Aurore—our 'George'—was consigned and there spent more than two years." Consigned, as if it were in some sense a misfortune. But George Sand herself had the good sense to see and to say, years afterwards, that those two years were "in many respects the happiest of her life." They were a merry set of girls at the convent and Aurore got the name of "madcap" among them, already showing a tendency to wildest notions of impossible schemes and a want of any check of delicacy or what not that usually keeps the right sort of girl in her place. After about eighteen months in the English convent Aurore felt the seriousness that usually comes to quick minds of her age and became converted, and from "madcap" passed to "Sainte Aurore" and seriously contemplated taking the

veil. In fact, pledged her own mind, or was led to pledge it, in that line of consecration. If she had only died then! But she did not. In 1820 the lady Deist "grandmother, fearing that the monastic idea was taking hold of Aurore in good earnest, decided to remove her from the Convent de Anglaises," and the first steps in her life toward "social freedom for women" were soon to begin.

GETTING A HUSBAND.

When Aurore was about sixteen Grandmother Dupin began to show signs of speedy dilapidation. Aurore, left largely to herself, soon took to reading such treasures of dim and speculative rationalism as the old lady had on the book-shelves, began to see that there were vast differences between "leading minds" touching the primal questions of religion and society. She had touched the "Imitation of Christ." She now touched Chateaubriand's "Spirit of Christianity," touched many things in fact, and became imbued with a calculating, commonplace idea of spiritual and social existence. "Her Catholicism was doomed from that hour." In sober truth she herself was doomed from that hour. Naturally she took to Shakespeare, Byron, Dante, above all, to Rousseau.

December, 1821, Grandmother Dupin died. Aurore went for a time to live with her mother. But the bird-seller's daughter, left to herself,—not even

her child to help refine the past,—naturally had grown termagantish. No natural affection revived in Aurore. Friends invited her to visit them often. She was happier elsewhere than with her mother. On one of these visits she met Colonel Casimer Dudevant. They were mutually pleased. They arranged matters between themselves. He was twenty-seven, she eighteen. He was illegitimate, she born in July of the same year her parents were married. It was a *mariage de raison*, founded on mutual friendliness, as she supposed. In September, 1822, Aurore Dupin became Madame Dudevant; the pair of conjugal rationalists went to Nahant for their honeymoon and a quiet country home. In the summer of 1823 Madame Dudevant forgot speculation for a while at joy over the birth of her son, Maurice. *Mariage de raison* did not work well. The colonel tired of the monotony. They tried a villa in Paris, a tour to the Pyrenees. No better. Her "large mind sought in vain for moral sympathy from a narrow, common spirit." That is, her husband, the colonel. Mutual approval turned to mutual contempt. Her large mind found a letter that the colonel did not mean she should see; found that the adopted illegitimate son of old M. Dudevant was weary of his bride. They agreed to disagree, as all the world knows, and she went to Paris to try her hand at independent journalism and her fair form in young

men's clothes. It was just after the revolution of July, 1830. M. Delatouche, proprietor of the *Figaro*, poet and novelist, had some previous knowledge of Madame Dudevant. Her cleverness as a writer soon became apparent. It was a chaotic, rampant age. A bright woman, free of cant, and with a discarded husband, was a joy to the circle of Paris journalists. She became "one of the boys." Nahant and the children are not forgotten, but the Colonel Dudevant,—let us hear no more of him. With Jules Sandeau the young Nahant wife became intimate, and the two together prepared "La Prima Donna," which was duly published in the *Revue de Paris*. Later "Rose et Blanche," by the same happy pair, was published under Sandeau's *nom de plume* of Jules Sand, through which pretty transactions of the wandering widow the world gets glimpses of the origin of "George Sand," and much female talk of "social freedom for women" that has sent many "souls to purgatory" since then.

The idea of taking her life as a duty and developing her genius through that channel of consecration seems never to have occurred to George Sand. The notion is of course foreign to French rationalism. What is duty? She had abandoned the veil, and life was simply a free and easy utterance of "advanced thoughts" on destiny, human culture, and the like.

WORKS AND MEN.

From Jules Sandeau to Alfred de Musset, to Chopin, to heaven knows what other substitutes for the *mariage de raison* hero of eighteen, the steps were not hard to take. A woman of George Sand's hungering seeks shining marks, and always takes the brightest she can find. Miss Thomas and the world may as well understand first as last, and be done with it, that "social freedom for woman," as applied in George Sand's life, means promiscuity of intercourse; means debasement of character, loss of honor and truth; means the loss of all that a woman is worth in the world. And the woman that thinks it is just the same for women as it is for men has only to try it—and die in utter, broken shame.

George Sand's intellectual work is the sole thing that has kept her name from infamy, even in an age like ours. It is of no consequence what such a woman teaches in the spheres of religion, morality, or social reform. Her works will eventually be judged on their merits as clever or other real pictures of the life she meant to portray. Of these Lelia may be taken as typical of the earlier aspiring period,—an intense cry of a bewildered soul. Of the romances of maturity, when the tree of good and evil had been tasted, but ere its bitter fruits had been fully borne, "Consuelo"

is the best, if not the least faulty, of all her productions. Love to the progressive French woman no longer means—did not mean to George Sand—what it meant to Shakespeare's best women or to any true woman that ever breathed.

Men that want to apologize for her may call her vision and range wider. But it is infinitely shallow and ends in nausea and self-contempt. George Sand was a better artist than a woman, but purest womanhood is the highest consecration art knows or dreams. Hers is not perfect art. It is a series of wild flashes of rebounding passion, aspiring mind, outraged sensibility, a lavish use of energies borrowed, often stolen, from men whose natures were finer than her own; a lamp not of life but of death, lit by powers not easy to name.

"We have drunken of Lethe at length, we have eaten of lotus;
What hurts it us here that sorrows are born to die?
We have said to the dream that caressed and the dread that smote us,
Good-night and good-by."

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